

THE LABOUR MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR

Editor : R. PALME DUTT

Volume 8

February, 1926

Number 2

PRINCIPAL CONTENTS

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CONTENTS

Notes of the Month	- - - -	Page 67
<i>LOCARNO AND THE CAPITALIST OFFENSIVE</i>		
Karl Marx on China	- - - -	„ 86
	By D. RIAZANOV	
Capital and Labour in the U.S.A.	- -	„ 93
	By A. A. PURCELL	
The I.L.P. Programme	- - - -	„ 99
	By EMIL BURNS	
The Left Wing	- - - -	„ 108
	By WM. PAUL	
The Murder of Gustav Landauer	- -	„ 112
	By ERNST TOLLER	
The World of Labour	- - - -	„ 115
Russian Communist Conference—Indian Textile Strike		
—Labour Conditions in Japan		
Book Reviews	- - - -	„ 124
Two Sides of a Medal		C. P. D.
A Poor Story of Coal		B. W.

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NOTES of the MONTH

A World Campaign—Peace?—The “Twilight of Empire”—Imperialism in Decay—Imperialist Antagonisms—Unstable Stabilisation—Fighting the Revolution—The First Stage—Reconstruction—From Dawes to Locarno—British Aims—Working Class Revival—Asiatic Nationalism—The Background of the Pact—French Opposition—German Opposition—France Weakening—German Bourgeois Bargain—No German Settlement—German Workers’ Rôle—Conclusions—American Rôle—Counter Revolution—An Instrument of War—Indiscretions—“The Fourth International”—Attacks Ahead.

THE British Government’s campaign of reaction is a world campaign. This fact, although recognised in principle, is not yet fully recognised in fact in the working class movement. That a direct attack on the working class at home is being organised is clear to all. But that the international policy of the British Government is an attempt to organise a similar combination and campaign on a world scale is not yet universally admitted, nor the consequences drawn. The same Government which is attacked for its policy at home is praised and applauded for its foreign policy. The same Labour representatives who have denounced the preparations against the working class have acclaimed the Pact as a step towards peace. Yet the two are part of the same policy, and that policy can only be fought on a single world front. It is not entirely accident that in the same week as the Locarno Treaty was signed the arrests of the Communists took place. The national and international policy of the Government are closely intertwined. Failure to recognise this completely weakens and breaks up the working class front against the capitalist attack. The impending conflict needs to be viewed, not only in the light of, but as part of, the international situation.

WHEN Mr. Baldwin last spring made his famous appeal for Industrial Peace, which was the preparation of the capitalist offensive that followed, the Labour representatives in the House acclaimed it as a "wonderful appeal," and declared the readiness of the Labour Party "in the interests of the nation" to follow Mr. Baldwin's lead. To-day exactly the same thing is happening over the Pact. Once again the unprepossessing offspring of Conservative Imperialism is held up as the joyful pledge of Peace, Humanity and Good Will. And once again the unwearied Labour Party representatives, endeavouring to bury their unworthy suspicions and respond like gentlemen, have acclaimed the new hope as a pacific triumph and have even endeavoured to claim it as a Labour triumph. And once again no doubt, when the time comes and its real character becomes clear, there will be the same indignation and denunciation of Mr. Baldwin for having "deceived" them. But the difference that is already arising is shown in the fact that a section of the Labour Party did from the first, in spite of party discipline and "national unity" of foreign policy, vote against the Pact, although their reasons covered a wide field of variation. It is all the more necessary now, before it is too late, to awaken the working class movement to the character of the policy which is embodied in the Pact, which is closely related to the policy of the capitalist offensive at home, and to the reactionary alignment and eventual war to which it is the inevitable prelude.

THE British Government, which is by common consent the author and inspirer of the Pact, is to-day fulfilling the rôle of the leader and organiser of reaction throughout the world. This fact can be demonstrated in Asia, in Europe, in relation to the Soviet Union and in relation to the working class at home. This rôle is the inevitable outcome of the post-war situation of the British Empire. The British Empire alone remains of the old Empires of Russia, Germany and Austria : and it survives as the reactionary "holding" power in world politics. It is threatened by the weakening industrial and trade position at home (the inevitable outcome of prolonged capitalist development and accumulation), by the rise of new capitalist powers, by the advance

of the working class, and by the emergence of nationalities within it. The British Empire is struggling for existence against the inescapable flood of new forces. The gathering consciousness of this is seen when the Government head of the Empire can speak of the "twilight" gathering upon it. The progressive advancing forces of world politics lie, on the side of capitalism, with America and the New World, and beyond capitalism with the advancing working class and the Soviet Union. The British Empire survives as the extreme reactionary force in world politics, allied with the conservative, reactionary and decaying forces all over the world. It is a significant fact, typical of the reversal of conventional notions, that to-day practically the whole of Asia (save for the kingdoms of Afghanistan, Siam and Japan) is Republican, and only in those territories subjected under the British Raj are monarchical forms artificially maintained by "progressive" British Capitalism. The Chinese history of the past year has shown how the "liberal" and "democratic" rôle of capitalism has passed to the United States, and Great Britain has been compelled to take up the position of the militant power, relying on "frightfulness" in Shanghai and Hong Kong. The same significance attaches to the passing away of "Free Speech" in Britain itself. The flag of the British Empire is to-day the Black Flag : and it is not surprising that Chamberlain at Locarno, according to report, should have acclaimed the Fascist deputation from Genoa as his "comrades."

THE situation of the British Empire is simply the picture of Imperialism in Decay. Imperialism in Decay becomes increasingly pre-occupied with the problem of its own internal weakness, and therefore with the problem of the Revolution. In consequence its most far-seeing statesmen endeavour to raise the banner of the Imperialist United Front, to overcome and diminish existing antagonisms and discords between the ruling powers in order to present a common front to the enemy. Previously the European system had been founded upon a triple division—Victor States, Defeated States and the Revolution. Even this triple division contained yet further discords : for the Victor States were in continual rivalry and antagonism over the spoils, both in relation to the Defeated States and in the colonies. Now, however, with the growing consolidation of the Soviet Union,

with the advance of the working class, and with the move to independence of the Asiatic nations, it became necessary to draw the front closer. Versailles has in effect to be liquidated before the advance of the Revolution. The triple division has to give place to a dual division. The antagonisms between the Victor States have to be composed, and the Victor States and the Defeated States have to be drawn together in a common front against the Revolution—Western and Central Europe against the Soviet Union, the colonies and the working class. This in its simplest form is the task of the Pact. It is the United Front of Imperialism in Decay.

BUT even this United Front is of necessity incomplete. The Pact cannot even claim to be a solution, or partial solution, of capitalist antagonisms (as the short-sighted Labour representatives have acclaimed it, welcoming the drawing together of Britain, France and Germany). For not only are the inter-relations of Britain, France and Germany extremely unstable. The real line of capitalist division goes beyond these. From the nature of the case the Pact can only be a combination of the decaying capitalist States, which are conscious of their weakness and of the necessity of drawing together. The advancing capitalist States, which are still confident in their strength, have no wish to enter into close alliance with the decaying capitalism which they are overcoming. The Pact is not adopted by the United States and the "Dominions"; and in the case of the Dominions the refusal to adopt it is a further straining of the bonds of the dividing Empire, and following of the leadership of the United States rather than of Britain. Thus the Pact becomes the starting point of a further intensified antagonism within capitalism. The Pact is not only the combination of the Old Capitalism of Europe against the Revolution and against Asiatic nationalism. It is also, in germ, the combination of the Old Capitalism of Europe under British leadership against the New Capitalism of America. The Pact has a double front; but each front is ultimately a front of war.

IT is necessary first, however, to examine more closely the rôle of the Pact in relation to the Revolution and the whole situation of post-war Europe. For the Pact completes, as the statesmen responsible for it have declared, the post-war period,

and opens up a new period. The seven years up to the Pact were engaged in the struggle to stabilise capitalism. The Pact is the attempt to fix stable capitalism in legal form. But this culmination is only reached after a succession of stages, during which the whole nature of European Capitalism has been transformed, and the so-called stabilised capitalism that has been reached is a very different thing from pre-war capitalism in Europe. To realise this difference it is necessary to review the stages that have taken place. It is possible to distinguish three stages in this process. The first, from 1919-1921, is the period of Versailles, of armed struggle with the Revolution and of the setting up and subsidising of the new counter-revolutionary States. During this period France, the military power, takes the lead, and America keeps in the background. The second, from 1921-1924, is the process of Reconstruction, the reduction of the new States on to a productive capitalist basis as tributaries of the leading capitalist Powers, and the consequent gradual liquidation of the military system of Versailles. This period is marked by intense conflict between Britain and France, the gradual weakening of France and the eventual accomplishment of reconstruction only under American economic hegemony. Finally, with 1925 comes the endeavour to fix the newly stabilised system by the political instrument of the Pact, and thus finally isolate the Soviet Union. It is in the perspective of these stages that the significance of the Pact as a landmark in the issue of Capitalism and the Revolution stands out clear.

FROM 1919 to 1921 the struggle between Capitalism and Revolution in Europe was open and elementary. All Central Europe, after the shock of war and famine, was entering on the social revolution. It is not generally realised how completely artificial was the means by which the old order was buttressed and maintained in Central Europe only by the external action of the Allies, by arms, subsidies and food. The Versailles Treaty, by the Balkanisation of Europe, established the new subsidised vassal military States to be the outposts of counter-revolution. The answer of Capitalism to the Revolution took two main forms : Arms and Food. While armed intervention and blockade was maintained for Soviet Russia, Soviet Hungary and the first few months of Workers'

Germany, at the same time for the new States, and for Germany and Hungary as soon as political control was established, money, food and coal were poured in in colossal quantities. Between 1918 and 1921 no less than one hundred and thirty-seven million pounds was spent in Relief by the Allied Governments, who could certainly not be accused of humanitarian considerations.

HOW far was the counter-revolutionary purpose of this Relief conscious? The answer is supplied by the British Director of Relief, Sir William Goode, writing in 1925, in defence of the expenditure, at a time when the original conditions had been almost forgotten and the expenditure was being attacked as a chaotic extravagance :—

Food was practically the only basis on which the Governments of the hastily erected States could be maintained in power. . . . Half of Europe had hovered on the brink of Bolshevism. If it had not been for the hundred and thirty-seven million pounds in relief credits granted to Central and Eastern Europe between 1919 and 1921, it would have been impossible to provide food and coal and the sea and land transport for them. Without food and coal and transport Austria and probably several other countries would have gone the way of Russia. . . . Two and a-half years after the Armistice, after the back of Bolshevism in Central Europe had been broken largely by relief credits, the League of Nations began to tackle Austria. . . . The expenditure of a hundred and thirty-seven millions was probably one of the best international investments, from a financial and political point of view ever recorded in history.

There is no lack of consciousness here of the issue of Capitalism and the Revolution as the real issue behind all the pacifist and humanitarian propaganda.

FROM 1921 to 1924 the main task for Capitalism was to develop from the hasty patchwork system of Versailles, under which Central Europe has been reclaimed from the Revolution, to a more stable basis of capitalist exploitation. Armed intervention ended, and at the same time the flow of Relief Credits dried up. Just as Russia passed from War Communism to the task of building up a socialist economy, so Capitalism passed from the arms and relief period of Counter-Revolution to the task of re-building profitable exploitation. Reconstruction Loans at a

high rate of interest were now the watchword, and the League of Nations became a useful instrument for carrying through the task of economic subjection of one country after another. But in this transition, violent antagonism developed between the Capitalist Powers, each of which sought to carry through the capitalist reorganisation on the terms most profitable to itself. France, which profited from the military system of Versailles, sought to establish its economic control of Europe by that means. British Capitalism was in complete opposition to this, but was not strong enough alone to counter French control in Europe. British-French antagonism was strong. The British attempt at reconstruction in 1922 at Genoa failed through French opposition. Thereafter the French military method was carried to an extreme degree in 1923 by the Ruhr occupation, with the result of bringing Germany to economic collapse and the verge of revolution. By the end of 1923, Britain, France and Germany were at a deadlock, utterly unable to extricate themselves from the tangle of their conflicting interests. It was at this point that the United States, which had been biding its time, intervened, and carried through the task of European reconstruction under its own direct leadership by the Dawes Report. The rôle of persuading the European peoples to place their neck under the American enslavement plan of the Dawes Report was entrusted to the "democratic" Left bloc in Europe which had its brief hour of puppet rule in 1924—only to be replaced by stronger hands when the task of enforcement began. Stable Capitalism had been re-established for the moment in Europe—but under the overlordship of the United States, thus giving rise to new problems and antagonisms in the coming period.

WITH the Dawes Report the foundations of the new economic system were laid for Europe. After the Dawes loan, American credits and American-British credits followed wholesale to most of the countries of Europe. America used the weapon of the War Debts to develop a hold on one country after another, and even the slogan of a Dawes Scheme for France began to be heard. But it was now necessary to stabilise the new system politically. It was necessary to prevent France using the Versailles Treaty to extend her hold by military means.

Above all it was necessary to bring the rulers of Germany, the principal object of exploitation, into the circle of agreements, to prevent the danger of the German nation revolting against their bondage and uniting with the Russian people who had already thrown off the rule of international financiers. All this made necessary the Pact. The Pact was the political complement of the Dawes Scheme. But in the reaching of the Pact new considerations came into play.

IN the negotiations leading to the Pact, Britain and France each endeavoured to realise their special aims. American pressure on Europe was exerted simply in favour of some kind of political settlement, which would enable peaceful penetration and economic organisation to proceed safely, draw the claws of France, secure Germany and diminish the wasteful load of armaments, thus enabling Europe to develop as a profitable colony. France endeavoured to utilise such a settlement to fix its old position of military hegemony under Versailles by the rigid framework of the Protocol, which would have made every settlement of Versailles guaranteed permanently and enforceable by arms. British opposition to this (after the misadventure of MacDonald, who here misread his Master's voice and supported the Protocol, but has subsequently changed over to the Pact with lightning rapidity in accordance with the demands of British Foreign policy) defeated the Protocol. But British aims were concerned primarily not with the problems of Europe, but with the Soviet Union and Asia. For Britain the Pact was the means to the realisation of the long-cherished scheme of the United Front against the Soviet Union, against Turkey and the colonial menace, towards the United Front of European Imperialism under British leadership, for the sake of which Britain was even ready to risk the increasing separation from the white Dominions. And the circumstances of 1925 favoured the British line.

FOR by 1925 big new factors came into view which are already revealing themselves as the real factors of the future and have rapidly begun to transform the world situation. These factors may be characterised in two events which marked the

beginning of 1925: the Russo-Japanese Treaty and Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity. During all the previous six years of imperialist intrigue and confusion in Europe, the Soviet Union, starting from the bottom level of war, blockade and famine, had steadily fought down these conditions and begun to build up and consolidate the new social order—the social order of workers' and peasants' rule entering on the transition to Socialism. This consolidation had now reached such a point that alone in Europe the conditions of the Russian workers were improving, while the conditions of all the other workers were going down. This inevitably had its effect. The workers of Western and Central Europe were rapidly losing any illusions as to the real nature of the capitalist stabilisation to which the Second International had led them as the true path. A revival of the working class movement began. This revival inevitably looked to the Russian workers as leaders and as allies. The outstanding expression of this revival was the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Alliance. The same process was visible in the numerous Social Democratic workers' delegations to Russia during 1925. The campaign of International Trade Union Unity, the Workers' Alliance and "Red Friday" in England, the fight against the Moroccan War in France, the considerable Communist election gains in Germany and Czecho-Slovakia, all these witnessed a revival of working-class struggle which was no longer in isolation from the Russian workers.

AT the same time the success of the Soviet Union in maintaining itself against all the efforts of Imperialism gave encouragement to every other section exploited by Imperialism to throw off the yoke, and in particular to the Asiatic nations. What Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity meant in Europe, that the Chinese national struggle meant in Asia. Both revealed powerful rising forces which were threatening the whole rule of Imperialism. The changing of the balance of forces was most startlingly revealed at the outset of the year when even Japan, which had been cold-shouldered by Anglo-American Imperialism, made a show of breaking the Imperialist front and entered into a treaty with the Soviet Union. This event raised immediate alarm. It was feared at once that Germany would equally enter into

alliance and seek thus to escape from the toils of Versailles. Panic-stricken visions were conjured up of a great bloc extending over Japan, China, Russia and Germany, which would overbalance the whole precarious domination of West European Imperialism. Therefore at all costs Germany had to be detached. Germany had to be won over, to be re-established as an equal, to be promised even to be re-established as an Imperialist Power. The battle for the Pact became above all a battle over the body of Germany, a battle to win Germany for the "West" against the "East," that is, in the last resort, for Imperialism against the Revolution.

IT is only necessary to see the sequence of events as they follow on one another in 1925 to see the background of the Pact. The most typical and outstanding events of the series run :—

- January.* Russo-Japanese Treaty.
- April.* Anglo-Russian Trade Union Alliance.
- May.* Moroccan War of Independence against France.
- June.* Chinese national struggle.
- July.* "Red Friday."
- August.* Syrian Revolt.
- September.* Scarborough Trades Union Congress.

And then follows :—

- October.* Locarno Pact of British, French and German capitalism.
Prosecution of British Communist Party.
- November.* British-French united front in the Middle East.

The sequence is so clear that it needs no comment.

AT first the Pact met with opposition both from France and from Germany. This fact is important, because it reflects the situation that the Pact did not primarily arise from a solution of European antagonisms, but only from the compelling force of larger antagonisms on the world side. The Pact reflected British aims, which were not primarily concerned with European questions, which indeed were strongly hostile to becoming involved in the French military system of Versailles ("It is not in the interests of Great Britain to be identified with the French system of military and political alliances."—*The Times*, March 11, 1925), but which sought to establish some kind of working agreement with France in order to present a common front to the Soviet Union and the Asiatic nations, and above all to bring Germany into the circle of

Western European Imperialism ("Germany must be brought into the comity of West European nations."—*The Times*, March 2, 1925). On the other hand, France was at first openly hostile to the Pact as the instrument of German rehabilitation, freely declared for the Protocol and in the beginning made no secret of its opposition to what the French diplomatic journalist Pertinax denounced as "the absurd tripartite Pact which enjoys the secret preference of the British Foreign Office." Nevertheless French efforts either to maintain the Protocol, or to establish a Seven Power Pact including France's Eastern allies, failed; the Five Power Pact which was actually reached is a Pact of Western European Imperialism in accordance with the British aim and not of French hegemony in Europe. The Pact was in this respect a British victory and a diplomatic defeat for France ("The restoration of British prestige in Europe is not the least of the benefits to have come out of Locarno."—*The Times*, October 21, 1925).

AT the same time Germany was also in profound opposition to the Pact, although the original proposal was sponsored by the German Foreign Office under British tutelage. The strength of the opposition is shown, not only in the prolonged internal conflict which preceded the acceptance of the Pact, but in the heavy vote against even on the day of ratification. This vote comprised both the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party. The actual numerical voting strength of these two parties, on the basis of the Presidential Election just preceding, comprises the majority of the German nation. Thus the representatives of the majority voted against the Pact. What does this mean? The actual opposition of the Nationalist Party leaders is, as events have again and again shown, a sham opposition, since the leaders of the German bourgeoisie, whom the Nationalist Party to-day represents, are in practice sold to allied capital. But the fact that this Nationalist opposition had to be carried to the length of the resignation of Ministers and a direct negative vote in the Reichstag indicates the strength of the national feeling against the Pact in the country. This national feeling is based on the recognition that the Pact means for Germany the voluntary acceptance of the burdens of Versailles, the turning away from the natural path of economic and

political development in the direction of Russia and the entering into union with the Western Imperialism which holds Germany subject. Such a union could only be based on a bargain of interests of the ruling group in the face of wide opposition of all sections in Germany. The Pact is, in the fullest sense, no union of peoples, but a typical capitalist marriage of convenience.

WHY was both French and German opposition to the Pact overcome? In the case of France the governing forces are extremely clear. During 1925, France was increasingly unable to bargain effectively, and therefore glad to accept the best arrangement that could be secured, for two main reasons. The first was the financial position, which became more and more critical and brought down Ministry after Ministry. It was in this field that Anglo-American influence could effectively be exerted on France. *The Times* in the early part of the year quotes with approval the American view that :—

the financial situation of France must slowly but inevitably exert a modifying influence on her political action.—*The Times*, April 3, 1925.

And Herriot himself in the last week before his fall admitted that :
a country with such a foreign debt, without making any arrangement with its creditors, has not entire liberty in its foreign policy.
—*Manchester Guardian*, April 6, 1925.

The second, which became no less overshadowing in the latter part of the year, was the colonial crisis. The reverses in Morocco, which led to the recall of Lyautey, and in Syria, which led to the recall of Sarraïl, brought France face to face with the same problem of collapsing Imperialism which confronted Britain and forced the necessity of a common front. The old policy of British-French antagonism and intrigue in Colonial questions, of French alliance with Turkey or British material support to Morocco or the Druses, had to give way to combination against the common danger. The Chamberlain policy of the Pact triumphed : but in either case the governing causes lay only in the external force of wider issues and antagonisms, and not in the elimination of existing antagonisms.

IN the case of Germany, the calculations of the leaders of the German bourgeoisie, who have taken the responsibility of accepting the Pact, are openly based on the immediate gains to be won in return. The German bourgeoisie, in voluntarily accepting

Versailles, in entering into the League of Nations, which is weighted in favour of the Allied victors, has done so in lively expectation of favours to come. The *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* writes :—

Germany's position in the world will change. . . . America's confidence in the economic position of Europe will be strengthened.

What does this mean ? The German bourgeoisie hopes, first and foremost, for more credits from America. Second, the German bourgeoisie hopes to be restored to the ranks of capitalist Powers, that is, to receive colonies. (It is significant of the real rôle of the League of Nations as the slave-market of the Powers that the question of German entry into the League should be closely bound up with the question of receiving "mandates.") That is to say, the German bourgeoisie is ready, as with the Dawes Scheme, to continue and extend the enslavement of the German nation to foreign capital in order to maintain their position as commission agents. The driving force to German acceptance of the Pact is not the "reconciliation" of Britain, France and Germany, but the irresistible draining power of the American dollar.

BUT this settlement is completely unstable. The German bourgeoisie only accepts the existing situation for the moment, in order at the first opportunity to strike free and resume an independent policy. The existing imperative demand is for credits ; but on the basis of these credits the attempt will be made, by the super-exploitation of the German workers, to rebuild independent German capitalism. Thus the very dependence on America carries with it future antagonism to America. The same applies to German relations to France and Britain. The declarations even to-day of leading German statesmen, as well as the comments of the Press, have made clear that the fundamental demand of the German bourgeoisie for the revision of Versailles and the fundamental orientation of German foreign policy in the present period towards the East remain consciously maintained and are only incompletely obscured by the veneer of the Pact.

BUT if the instability of the Pact applies to the German bourgeoisie, which has consciously entered into alliance with Anglo-American capital, it applies a hundredfold more to the German nation which is subjected to the enslavement of

intensified foreign capitalist exploitation by the working of the Dawes Scheme and the Pact. A recent example of this affords striking evidence of the situation. By the Dawes Scheme the German State Railways were handed over to a private company (with the blessings of MacDonald and Thomas) with instructions to effect "economies" in order to extract a portion of the necessary tribute. It is now announced that of the 1,009,000 railway staff, 279,000 had been dismissed by the end of last year and 40,000 more were to be dismissed—a total of 329,000 or 33 per cent. of the staff (*Daily Mail*, December 1, 1925). It is inevitable that the German working class will enter into more and more intense struggle with these conditions of servitude. The prospect is indeed calculated upon by bourgeois observers :—

The Dawes system means lower wages and longer hours, and the certainty of fierce social conflicts sooner or later.—J. L. GARVIN, in the *Observer*, August 23, 1925.

A great effect will be produced on the wages and hours of workmen in Germany, and the time will come when there will be a revolt against this state of things, and they will stand it no longer.—D. LLOYD GEORGE in the House of Commons, March 25, 1925.

Thus the Pact is built upon a volcano ; and represents in fact an alliance of bourgeois governments against the future working-class struggle.

FROM all these considerations the following conclusion necessarily results. The Pact is not a reconciliation or unification of England, France and Germany or a solution of their antagonisms. All the basic antagonisms of these capitalist states remain unaffected. Thus the Pact is not, even in a limited or superficial sense, a "partial peace" or a "stage to peace," in the words of the Labour apologists and Second International. Even if the Pact were to mean the beginning of a real combination and amalgamation of English, French and German capitalism (of which there is no sign) it would not be in any sense a partial peace or a stage to peace, any more than in the economic war of capitalism the formation of a trust represents a partial peace or a stage to peace. On the contrary, the formation of the trust opens out the development of a wider antagonism. In exactly the same way the Pact opens out the development of a wider antagonism, but in this case without overcoming those already existing. The Pact is simply a drawing

together of the capitalist governments of Britain, France and Germany in the face of certain larger issues and compelling forces, which throw into the background for the moment, without solving, the existing antagonisms. The meaning of the Pact can only be understood in the light of these larger compelling forces and antagonisms, and not in the light of any supposed harmonious reconciliation of British, French and German capitalist interests.

WHAT are the larger compelling forces? They are twofold. The first is American Finance. American Finance imperiously demanded some form of settlement and policing of Europe to secure to it successful and uninterrupted exploitation. When the new American Ambassador to London arrived in the spring of 1925, and delivered his first speech at the Pilgrims' Dinner, his reference to the American view of European problems was simple and straightforward. He said :—

We are not as a people interested in making speculative advances.
—*The Times*, May 5, 1925.

When in August, 1925, the British and French representatives were negotiating the reply to the German note over the Pact, the French Press complained that the proceedings were dominated by the American Ambassador. Direct financial pressure on France, the hope of credits for Germany, worked political wonders in easing the passage of the Pact. Finally, when the Pact was successfully achieved in October, the expression of American satisfaction was clear and unmistakable :—

The New York Stock Market vaulted to a new high point on the Conference news.—*Manchester Guardian*, October 19, 1925.

But this common subjection to America, which thus helped to produce the Pact, does not mean that Europe henceforth enters on the path of harmonious development under American overlordship. On the contrary, this very subjection to America contains within itself the greatest antagonism of world capitalism ; and the Pact which to-day reflects the subjection can to-morrow become the instrument of this antagonism.

THE second compelling force is the menace of working-class and colonial revolt and the growing power of the Soviet Union. This menace from the point of view of Imperialism in Decay reflects itself in a hundred forms. There is

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the issue of German working-class revolt against the whole enslavement of Versailles and Dawes. There is the issue of German-Russian Unity. There is the issue of the growth of Communism and the Third International in Western Europe. There is the issue of Asiatic Nationalism. And above all there is the issue of the growing strength and consolidation of the Soviet Union, whose existence is a challenge to Imperialism. Against these the action of Imperialism takes a hundred forms, but all necessitating closer combination. There is the common financial blockade of the Soviet Union conducted under the leadership of the City. There is the simultaneous prosecutions of the Communists in the different countries and support of the Fascists. There is the British-French United Front in the Middle East. And above all there is the Pact. The Pact is hailed as the Saviour of Western "civilisation" against the menace of Bolshevism. Why? Because the Pact, by bringing Germany into the League, combines Britain, France and Germany in an armed alliance to make war in common on every "outlaw" nation which dares to disobey the orders of this Imperialist League. The long discussion with Germany as to the extent to which Germany may be called on to join in common military action against an outside State showed clearly enough the issue which was dominating attention. The German statesmen were appeased with a polite and meaningless letter to read to their people, to the effect that in any action Germany's special position would always be taken into consideration; but Chamberlain in speaking to the House of Commons declared plainly enough that Germany would in fact be under the "same obligations" as any other member.

THUS the Pact is an instrument of war and not of peace. The first sequel of the Pact has been the combined front against Turkey over Mosul and the open threat of war preparations (including the invocation of the machinery of the League) if Turkey does not yield to the imperialist plunderers. This is the first expression of the "Locarno spirit." To call the Pact, as the second International resolution does, "a partial success in the fight of the working class against methods of violence" is brazen hypocrisy. The Pact contains the most explicit regulations

and obligations of imperialist violence, which are now imposed on all the signatory States. The second clause not only lays down a host of causes of "legitimate" war, but definitely includes in these any action in pursuance of a decision of the Assembly or Council of the League of Nations. As if to make doubly sure, a special seventh clause is added to establish that there shall be no restriction on the right of the League of Nations "to take whatever action may be deemed wise and effectual to safeguard the peace of the world." When these repeated war clauses are taken in conjunction with the known aims, declarations and policy of the Governments composing the League Council, the purpose of the whole is too clear to be ignored. Those who support the Pact, like those who support the League, as a stage to peace are in fact putting weapons in the armoury of Imperialism for the next war, when they will find themselves called on to fight in the name of their Pacts and their Leagues for Imperialist and counter-revolutionary aims.

IN their asides men often speak the truth. When the Government Minister, Mr. Ormsby-Gore, sought to defend his famous "explanation" of Locarno to the effect that "the solidarity of Christian civilisation is necessary to stem the most sinister growth that has arisen in European history"; that "the struggle at Locarno, as I see it, was this: Is Germany to regard her future as bound up with the fate of the great Western Powers, or is she going to work with Russia for the destruction of Western civilisation?"; and that "Locarno means that so far as the present government of Germany is concerned, it is detached from Russia, and is throwing in its lot with the Western Party"—Mr. Ormsby-Gore sought to defend these striking statements on the ground that they were "not part of a prepared speech," but were made "on the spur of the moment." Exactly. He could not have made his declaration more convincing. For in capitalist diplomacy and politics it is precisely the prepared and solemn sentence which is wholly unconvincing; it is the uncalculated indiscretion which may sometimes throw an unwished-for light on the genuine mind of the speaker. Mr. Ormsby-Gore's analysis of the Pact may have been

more romantic than profound ; but it throws a vivid light on the mind of the Conservative Ministry.

IN the same way an enlightening incident is recorded of Mr. Chamberlain at Locarno. The *Matin* relates that after the Pact had been signed, and the majority of the dignitaries had departed, Mr. Chamberlain and M. Briand remained with one or two journalists. M. Briand had jokingly remarked (with reference to the difficulty of the German delegates to reconcile their party to Locarno) that it would be necessary to form a new party, "a Locarnist Party." Mr. Chamberlain declared that he would belong at once.

Thereupon the two Ministers drank to the health of "the Fourth International of Locarno" amid the applause of the journalists.

"The Fourth International of Locarno." It would be impossible to describe more aptly the character of the Pact. For it is to be observed that no one would speak of a "Fourth International" who is not already thinking of, and even pre-occupied with, the Third International, and above all with the problem of countering the Third International ; still less would a respectable member of the bourgeoisie make a joke to a colleague about the Fourth International if both were not already very clearly pre-occupied with the Third International. If, then, Messrs. Chamberlain and Briand consider that they can describe the Pact among themselves as essentially an instrument for combating the Third International, that is for combating the revolutionary working-class movement, it is not entirely unreasonable suspicion on the part of the working class to take a similar view.

THE Locarno Pact is a part of the capitalist offensive. Locarno has not brought either peace or any basic stabilisation. The events immediately following Locarno have shown government crises in France and Germany, financial and economic crisis in France, impending industrial conflict in England and heavy government reaction, smashing up the Trade Unions in Italy, military dictatorship in Greece, war in China, Morocco and Syria and the threat of war with Turkey, and the worsening of economic conditions and production throughout

Western and Central Europe. But what Locarno has achieved is purely and simply the strengthening of the front of reaction, the formation of a military imperialist alliance and the endeavour to confuse the Western European workers in front by the use of pacific phrases. The same Government which produced the Communist prosecution and the strike-breaking preparations has produced the Locarno Pact. This combined attack demands ever closer unity of the international working class to meet it. The line of the British workers must be : solidarity with the German workers against Dawes and the Pact ; solidarity with the Russian workers against any attack by the world reaction outside ; and solidarity with the Eastern nations in the struggle against Imperialism. Those " pacifists " who urge on the workers support of the Pact in the name of peace are in fact urging a policy of war. The path to peace lies only through the working-class struggle. The moral of the Pact for the working class, as of the Government's home preparations, is : Be Prepared ; a new wave of reaction is developing which will test the whole strength, unity, consciousness and solidarity of the working-class movement at home and abroad.

R. P. D.

KARL MARX ON CHINA

By D. RIAZANOV

[By the courtesy of Professor Riazanov, Director of the Marx and Engels Institute in Moscow, we have received the original English text of an important article on China written by Karl Marx in 1853. Owing to considerations of space we are not able to present this article this month. But we reproduce here the able introductory article of Professor Riazanov translated from the journal "Under the Banner of Marxism." Now that China is again awakening, and a new stage in the development of the Chinese revolution is taking place, it is especially opportune to take note of Marx's accurate analysis of the fundamental basis of these changes.]

ALREADY in the *Communist Manifesto* the significance of the East Indian and Chinese market is pointed out as a factor in the development of European capitalism. It was, indeed, from East India that British capitalism began its offensive against China. The East India Company used its trade monopoly with China to make the latter a market for the sale of Indian opium. Since, however, all English traders were equally interested in the intoxication of the Chinese people, the monopoly was removed in 1833. The attempt of the Chinese Government in 1839 to forbid the import of opium produced the so-called opium war against China, which Marx characterises in *Capital* as one of the chief links in the long chain of trade wars in which since the sixteenth century, even in the East, the European nations were engaged. After the English had cruelly destroyed a whole series of Chinese towns and had slaughtered thousands of Chinese for the honour of Christianity and European civilisation, they forced on China in 1842 the treaty of Nanking, which provided for the opening of the five Treaty Ports—Kanton, Amoy, Ningpo, Shanghai and Foochow, the payment of what was at that time an enormous indemnity, and the surrender of the island of Hong Kong, which forms the chief base for British Imperialism in the Far East. Following the treaty of Nanking came treaties with the United States and with France.

The defeat in battle with the Europeans was a hard blow for the prestige of the Manchu dynasty which had been supreme in China since the seventeenth century. Among the peasant masses, groaning under the burden of taxation and the pressure of the bureaucracy, and who reacted at times to their subjection by sporadic revolts, there now began to ripen a ferment of dissatisfaction which was especially strong in the South East where the destructive influence of foreign capital most made itself felt. To this was added the fermentation among the Chinese "intelligentsia" of that time, the teachers and the lower officials, as well as among the craftsmen ruined by foreign competition.

Just at the time when in West Europe the waves of the 1848 revolution reached their height, the activity of the secret societies in China also became stronger and propaganda for new religious sects developed among the peasants. The European missionaries against their will played the part of hens with a brood of ducklings. They remarked with terror that the drawing-room Christianity preached by them had taken root among the rebellious peasantry in the only militant form of Christianity, which demands equality in this world. Europe learnt of this for the first time through the well-known German missionary and sinologist, Gutzlaff, who also was the first to make a Chinese translation of the Bible.

In the same international review (January, 1850) in which Marx investigated the influence of the discovery of the Californian gold mines on the development of the world market, and in which he prophesied for the Pacific Ocean the same rôle that the Mediterranean had once played in the ancient world, and which had then passed to the Atlantic Ocean, Marx also refers to the interesting communications of Gutzlaff. He wrote :—

The slow but regularly increasing over-population of the country long ago made the social relations there very oppressive for the great majority of the nation. Then came the English and enforced free trade for themselves in the five ports. Thousands of British and American vessels sailed towards China, and in a short time the country was filled to excess with cheap British and American factory wares. The Chinese industry based on hand labour was subjected to the competition of the machines. The hitherto unshakable Central Empire experienced a social crisis. Taxes ceased to come in, the State fell to the edge of bankruptcy, the population sank in masses into pauperism, broke out in revolts, maltreated and killed the Emperor's mandarins and the

priests of the Fohis. The country came to the verge of ruin, and is already threatened with a mighty revolution. And there is even worse. Among the masses and in the insurrection there appeared people who pointed to the poverty on the one side and the riches on the other, and who demanded, and are still demanding, a different division of property and even the entire abolition of private property. When Mr. Gutzlaff, after twenty years' absence, returned once more to civilised people and Europeans, he heard talk of Socialism, and asked what that was. When it was explained to him he exclaimed in consternation, "Shall I then never escape this pernicious doctrine? The very same thing has been preached for some time by many people among the mobs in China."

"Chinese Socialism," continues Marx, "bears much the same relation to European Socialism as Chinese philosophy does to Hegelian philosophy. It is, in any case, an intriguing fact that the oldest and the most unshakable empire in the world has in eight years by the cannon-balls of the English bourgeoisie been brought to the eve of a social revolution which will certainly have the most important results for civilisation. When our European reactionaries in their immediately coming flight across Asia finally come up against the Great Wall of China, who knows whether they will not find on the gates which lead to the home of ancient reaction and ancient conservatism the inscription, 'Chinese Republic—liberty, equality, fraternity.'" (*Literary Remains*, vol. 3, pages 444-5.)

The movement on which the good missionary Gutzlaff, the apostle of China, as the Germans called him, gave information to the Europeans was the forerunner of the great Taiping rebellion. The leader of this movement, Hung, had become acquainted with Christianity through the Gutzlaff translations of the old and new Testaments. As early as 1851 he became the leader of the revolting peasants. The Taipings took one town after another. Finally, in March, 1853, even Nanking was taken, which for a long time remained the capital of the celestial empire founded by Hung. At that time it appeared as if the Taipings within a few months would also take possession of Peking. The entry into Nanking, however, remained the highest point in the rebellion.

It was at this period that there was written the article of Marx which appeared in the *New York Tribune* on June 14, 1853. At that time reaction was triumphant in Europe. The Communist League was in dissolution, the Mailand revolt (February 1853) which was organised by Mazzini and his followers ended in defeat. Marx had greeted it as the symptom of an approaching revolutionary crisis. With even greater fervour, therefore, he

greeted the beginning of the revolutionary movement in the Far East. The contrast between petrified Europe and the movement in China, where movement had so long been absent, forcibly impressed itself. Civilised Europe, where thrones and altars had been stormed, was now diligently occupied with table turning, a fashion of American origin. "One is reminded of the fact," wrote Marx later in *Capital*, referring to these events, "that China and the tables began to dance when all the remaining world appeared to be standing still—*pour encourager les autres*."

The State founded by Hung or Tjan-Wang was of a purely theocratic character. After the Taipings and their leaders had renounced all hope of the conquest of Northern China, they sought to assure themselves of the South-East, utilising for this purpose the antagonism between the Manchus and the English. When in 1856 a new Chinese war broke out with England, and later also with France, the Taipings allowed themselves to be taken in tow by the British Imperialists. While they owed their first victories precisely to the circumstance that they had risen against the yoke of the strangers, against the Manchus, they now—in order to save their theocratic state—made common cause with the much more revengeful and treacherous foreigners. Thus the Taiping movement which in the beginning had borne a revolutionary character, became a reactionary movement which lost the sympathy of the peasant masses. After the English, in union with the Taipings, had subdued Northern China, they helped Peking to drown in blood the Taiping insurrection.

Marx followed attentively the further development of these events in China and not only stigmatised, in a series of articles in the *New York Tribune* during 1857-1859, all the crimes of the "civilised seafarers," but also subjected to a new analysis the statistics of Anglo-Chinese trade.

Although Marx in the article mentioned begins with the fact of the rapid destruction of the "Asiatic mode of production" under the influence of the penetration of English capitalism, and although he still hoped that the imminent European revolution would find the requisite support in the awakened East, nevertheless he comes to the conclusion that he had at first over-estimated the extent and tempo of the destructive influences of English capitalism.

“The real task of bourgeois society,” wrote Marx in 1858 in a letter to Engels, “is the creation, at least in outline, of a world market, and of a type of production resting on this basis. Since the world is round, this task seems to have been brought to a conclusion with the colonisation of California and Australia and the inclusion of China and Japan. The difficult question for us is as follows. Revolution is imminent on the Continent and will at once assume a Socialist character. But will it not necessarily be crushed in this little corner, since over a much greater territory the movement of bourgeois society is still in the ascendant? As far as China is especially concerned, I have assured myself by a close analysis of the movement of trade since 1836, firstly that the soaring of English and American exports in 1844-1846 revealed itself in 1847 as a sheer delusion, and that also in the ten years following the average has remained practically stationary while Chinese exports to England and America increased enormously, and secondly that the opening of the five ports and the occupation of Hongkong only resulted in the trade of Canton passing to Shanghai. The other ‘emporiums’ do not count. The chief cause of the failure of this market seems to be the opium trade, to which in fact all increase in the export trade to China is continually limited; and, after that, the internal organisation of the country, its minute agriculture, &c., which will cost an enormous time to break down.” (*Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, vol. 2, pages 292-3.)

When Marx in 1862 renewed his writing on the Taiping movement (*Press*, July 7, 1862) he was already much more condemnatory. As already mentioned, this movement was in a stage of complete dissolution. Marx says :—

“A little while before the tables began to turn, China, this living fossil, began to become revolutionary. In itself there was nothing extraordinary in this phenomenon, for Oriental empires continually exhibit an immutability in social sub-structure with restless permutations of the persons and races who have possessed themselves of the political super-structure. China is ruled by a foreign dynasty. After three hundred years why should not a movement develop for the overthrow of this dynasty? The movement had from the beginning a religious complexion, but that was a feature it had in common with all Oriental movements. The immediate motives for the appearance of the movement were obvious—European interference, opium wars, and consequent disruption of the existing Government, the flow of silver out of the country, disturbance of the economic equilibrium through the introduction of foreign manufactures, &c. What seemed to me a paradox was that the opium animated instead of stupefying. As a matter of fact the only original part of this revolution was its leaders. They are conscious of their task, quite apart from the change of dynasty. They have no slogans. They represent a still greater torment for the masses of the people than for the old rulers. Their

motive seems to be nothing else than to bring into play against the conservative marasmus grotesquely repulsive forms of destruction, destruction without any germ of regeneration."

In many respects, indeed, the Taiping insurrection was reminiscent of the European peasant wars, if only in as much as the participation in it of the town proletariat was equally non-existent.

In regard to India, also, as in regard to China, Marx was compelled to come to the conclusion that the tempo of development, measured in terms of world history, took place at a much slower rate from the point of view of the individual than might have been anticipated. In the third volume of *Capital* he wrote :—

"The obstacle presented by the internal solidity and articulation of pre-capitalistic national modes of production to the corrosive influence of commerce is strikingly shown in the intercourse of the English with India and China. The broad basis of the mode of production is here formed by the unity of small agriculture and domestic industry, to which is added in India the form of communes resting upon common ownerships of the land, which, by the way, was likewise the original form in China. In India, the English created simultaneously their direct political and economic power as rulers and landlords, for the purpose of disrupting these small economic organisations. The English commerce exerts a revolutionary influence on these organisations and tears them apart only to the extent that it destroys by the low prices of its goods the spinning and weaving industries, which are an archaic and integral part of this unity. And even so this work of dissolution is proceeding very slowly. It proceeds still more slowly in China where it is not backed up by any direct political power on the part of the English." (*Capital*, vol. iii, English translation, C. H. Kerr & Co., pages 392-3.)

The power of resistance of the "Asiatic mode of production" proved itself so great that several decades passed before European capitalism succeeded in shattering this "Great Wall of China." To the assistance of the economic factor, the low prices of industrial goods, came the political factor, a new series of wars, in which the youthful Japanese imperialism played no small part. The indivisible union of agriculture and industry, the main secret of the immobility of the "Asiatic mode of production," was burst asunder. The Chinese peasantry separated from itself great masses of "coolies," and fell ever deeper into dissolution. Emigration, which for a period had acted as a safety valve, soon proved itself powerless in the struggle with the "plague spot of the proletariat."

Attracted by cheap labour power in China, Japanese and British capitalists began to bring into existence a "national" big industry. In effect they produced an organised and disciplined industrial proletariat, which is now preparing to assume the leadership of all the exploited poor, rural as well as urban.

The question which Marx formulated sixty years ago has been given a positive answer by history. No danger threatens the European revolution from the East. There, also, capitalism is finding its grave-diggers. And even if ancient Europe still has the appearance of stability, "immobile" China on the other hand, following the example of Soviet Russia, is already dancing the revolutionary Carmagnole—*Ca ira, Ca ira!*

BOUND VOLUMES

for 1925

*See particulars on
page 66.*

CAPITAL AND LABOUR IN U.S.A.

By A. A. PURCELL, M.P.

THE first superficial impression I got from the United States was one of the extraordinary obsession with *bigness* that runs through the whole of social and industrial life there. Everything is “million dollar”—everything is on the grand scale. This after all is natural enough: for in the United States we have capitalism in its most gigantic, most advanced, most powerful form.

That America is the home of trusts and combines, of the most highly developed stage of capitalist monopoly, is a commonplace. But I doubt if all the implications of this fact, and more particularly its meaning for the workers, are fully realised by those who have never set foot in the land of the free. There has been a good deal of loose talk going on for some time about the high wages current in America, about the superior conditions of life of the workpeople, the number of workmen who own their own motor-cars, and so on. We have even heard this talk inside our own movement, using the example of America to demonstrate the advantages, to the employers as well as to the workers, of high wages.

What struck me, as a workman, most about the various works and factories I visited? I was not concerned with their perfection of industrial technique, remarkable in itself though that is. No, what impressed itself unforgettably on my mind was the spirit of vigorous regimentation, the extreme division of labour which makes a man a mere automaton, performing one monotonous mechanical operation year in year out. The American industrial *régime*, in spite of its boasted high wages, is even more than its British counterpart a monotonous tyranny, in which the worker is regulated and ordered and disciplined and controlled to the last possible degree.

American industrialism is nothing more nor less than a slave system: its so-called “benevolence” towards its workers being merely incidental to the great task of extracting profits—and fabulous profits, too—for plutocracy. An ironical fact worth

noting is that its keenest advocates are employers, servile writers and the like—not workmen. It is easy enough to talk glibly about the “advantages” of America when you don’t have to benefit from those “advantages” yourself.

A point into which I inquired with some care was the question of high wages. Here it was particularly helpful to get the evidence of English workers who had emigrated in the course of the last few years. They all told me the same story. Though their nominal wages were higher than they would be getting in England, the cost of living was so high that their real wages were about the same: in some cases even less. Special stress was also laid by all my informants on the terrific pace and intensive character of the work. So severe is the strain that men are, on the average, worn out at forty years of age—whereupon they promptly get the sack: another sidelight on “benevolence”!

It must be remembered, of course, that there are exceptional trades where the wages are extremely high. The chief of these is the building trade, where skilled workers such as painters, plasterers and bricklayers command at the present moment in America a high “scarcity value”; their wages may be as high as £16 or more a week. But this is exceptional.

My previous remarks about the extreme regimentation to which the workers are subjected need to be supplemented by some observations on the most all-pervading and one of the most significant features of American industrial life. I refer to the Spy System. It is no exaggeration to say that in America the Spy System is as widespread, as usual, as powerful and as integral a feature of industry as insurance is in this country. Which is not surprising, since spying is of its nature a form of insurance—against strikes, against Trade Unionism, against any militancy whatever on the part of the workers.

Spy companies, such as Pinkerton, Baldwin-Felts, W. J. Burns and a score of others are themselves vastly wealthy and powerful corporations, living like parasites on the general body of capitalism. Even if employers find, as a number of them are finding, that to employ spies is playing with fire, they cannot escape. The spy company has them in its clutches, and it blackmails them into continuing their “patronage.” In addition to sending spies to

work, as ordinary workmen, in the factory, Burns or Pinkerton or the others will have their "men" who worm their way into the Trade Unions, and have been known to achieve prominent positions in the movement, which they were able to employ with deadly effect. I have met men who have been spies and they made no bones about it—any more than they did about the gun in their pocket.

An American writer in this magazine,¹ Mr. Heber Blankenhorn, described the Labour spy system as "begotten by unrestricted capital out of restricted Labour organisation." He continued:—

The tendency of American Unions (not without parallels abroad) toward being craft cliques bore its part in begetting espionage. Not only did this leave outside the Unions masses of workers to be the battering ground of disorganising spies, but, within the Unions, cliques, with their undemocratic practices, invited spying. When "getting" the official clique meant getting the Union, employers were likely to avail themselves of the opportunity.

It is no use blinking the fact that in comparison with, say, our own Trade Union movement, the American movement—by which I mean the American Federation of Labour—is extremely backward. It is organised on the most rigid, narrow, exclusive craft basis which makes even the unfortunate craft distinctions that still exist in our own movement pale into insignificance. Its attitude towards the sixteen or twenty millions of unorganised immigrant workers is a more aloof, more hostile re-edition of the attitude of our "new model" craft unions towards the unskilled workers sixty and more years ago. Its attitude towards the masses of negro workers, with which I deal in detail below, is even more hostile.

The American Federation of Labour does not pretend to be other than an organisation of the skilled white "aristocracy of labour": it is in the literal sense of the words a "minority movement," organising only a small minority of the industrial workers of the United States. I do not need to dwell at length on its various characteristics which seem so reactionary from our point of view—such as its opposition to nationalisation and to independent Labour political action. These points are sufficiently well enough known here; it is essential that they should always

¹ THE LABOUR MONTHLY, August, 1922, vol. 3, No. 2, pp. 94-102.

be borne in mind. To a British worker it comes with something of a shock to observe that many prominent officials of the American Federation of Labour and its affiliated Unions are Republican or Democratic Members of Congress. Imagine our feelings if, nowadays, British Trade Union leaders sat as Liberal or Tory M.P.'s !

It was to the Annual Convention of the American Federation of Labour that, speaking as fraternal delegate from the Trades Union Congress, I made a plea for American support of International Trade Union unity. That plea was rejected by President Green in his declaration that the American Federation of Labour would only unite with Labour movements:—

that rest on sound, fundamental principles of democracy and justice and righteousness and human liberty.

The same point was stressed in the Convention resolution, which formulated a Labour “Monroe Doctrine,” saying, among other things:—

The Americans stand for democracy. . . . Neither the Red International of autocratic Moscow nor any other International may in complacency ignore this definition of American Labour policy. American Labour is friendly to all the world, in so far as the world is bent upon achievement of the aims of democracy. It will contest to the last every inch of ground whatever and wherever autocracy seeks to invade the hallowed soil of this hemisphere. And we shall accept no pretence of “world Labour unity” as a mask for invading disrupters and destroyers. The New World is dedicated to human freedom.

Now I want to say, with the same frankness and sincerity that my American friends showed to me, that all this talk about American “democracy” is, in my humble opinion, complete humbug. “Democracy”—in the land of the frame-up, the gunman and the spy ? “Democracy”—in the land of Rockefeller and Morgan, of Pinkerton and Baldwin-Felts ? “Democracy”—in the land where negro lynchings and the bludgeoning and murder of workmen striking for their rights have been a part of every-day life these many years ? “Democracy”—in the land where all the forces of the law, the State and the police—the whole machinery of government, legal and illegal—are openly and shamelessly at the beck and call of triumphant plutocracy in order to perpetuate the capitalist system and the exploitation of the working people ?

I submit that we must not be deluded by the mere *forms* of government; and that if we pierce through to the *facts* behind those forms we see that America is ruled by a capitalist *dictatorship*. America is the supreme example of the new Tsarism—the Tsarism of monopoly capitalism, the Tsarism of the finance oligarchy.

Even some of the most important forms of government are undemocratic. Thus the Cabinet is personally appointed by the President, acting on his own absolute discretion. It is responsible to him and to him alone.

This undemocratic spirit holds equal sway in the American Federation of Labour and the American Trade Union movement. The movement is ruled by an oligarchy which has virtually absolute powers. I noticed, for instance, at the Atlantic City Convention how all the important committees and delegations were nominated by the President and automatically agreed to by the Convention. Thus, the President in effect determined the decisions of the Convention, for the reports of the various committees are usually adopted without much ado. This is attributable to the overwhelmingly official character of the Convention.

The “spoil system” which is such a feature of American official life applies also in the American Federation of Labour, and, I believe, in many of the Unions. Thus when President Green succeeded the late President Gompers, he gave notice of dismissal to every man-jack of the American Federation of Labour staff—organisers, &c.—irrespective of their length of service, Union experience, or anything. They were then notified that if they liked to apply for re-employment their cases would be considered.

A characteristic feature of the Convention, which would have been inconceivable in England, was the reception of a “fraternal” delegate from so well-known a patriotic and non-Labour organisation as the American Legion. This delegate was himself a prominent Trade Union leader, Major George L. Berry, of the Printing and Pressmen. Many of our best friends in this country, because of their so called “left” tendencies, might soon find themselves railroaded out of the A. F. of L. as extreme “Lefts”—as many good militant Union men that I met had been railroaded out, to the great loss of the movement. For one man, or a group of men, stand no chance against the official machine, backed up as

it actually is by the powers of the law and the police. Once outside the American Federation of Labour you are finished; your mouth is stopped, your activities checked, and if necessary suppressed.

Turn now to the negro worker. There are many millions of him. He represents a great problem that the American Labour movement cannot help but face: yet while the doors of most Unions remain closed, or very difficult of entry, to negro workers there cannot be even a beginning to facing this problem. It is true that some negro workers are organised in American Federation of Labour Unions. There were negro delegates at the Atlantic City Convention: *but they were delegates* in name only and seemed to be completely isolated.

I was very pleased to learn that my plea for the unity of all workers, black, white, brown or yellow, was much appreciated by the negro trade unionists.

The negro workers have begun to form their own Unions: but these are not tolerated north of the "Dixie" line, as a negro hotel porter, who had previously been a Trade Unionist and wished heartily to be one again, told me. He told me, further, that he had once been out on strike with some hundreds of negro fellow-workers. All their places were taken by scabs and the strike broken. Those scabs were white workers.

Yet the negro worker is one of the greatest potential sources of strength for American Trade Unionism. Since he is accustomed to a far lower standard of life he can hold out in a strike much longer, and on infinitely less, than his white brother.

I may seem, in this article, to have painted too dark a picture. It represents the facts as one British working man saw them, set down without fear or favour. And the future is hopeful; of that I am convinced, when I recall the magnificent meetings I was privileged to address in a number of the principal American cities. *There* were the rank-and-file American Trade Unionists—eager to hear the message of International unity, full of real sympathy with their comrades in Britain, in Russia and throughout the world. The spirit and the enthusiasm of those meetings make me confident that the cause of unity will finally triumph in America.

THE I.L.P. PROGRAMME

By EMIL BURNS

MEETING, we are told, on the Eve of Christmas, the Administrative Council of the Independent Labour Party drafted a scheme for a Frontal Attack on Poverty. This (the scheme—not the Frontal Attack) was launched on a flooded world on New Year's Day. According to Brailsford, it knits together the new departures in Socialist Policy which the I.L.P. has been discussing during the past three years. It is evidently conceived by its authors as a landmark in the history of the I.L.P. For this reason it deserves to be read with exceptional attention, and if the language of the manifesto is in places obscure, we have Brailsford's interpretation as a guide.

Brailsford states that the new departure consists in linking up the ultimate aim with immediate practical steps. In fact the ultimate aim is briefly described in the manifesto as the realisation of a Socialist State. As for the immediate practical steps, we are given a series of proposals followed by steps which may be immediate and practical, but which do not appear to link up with anything beyond a propaganda campaign.

In the forefront of the proposals is a National Living Wage, "representing the minimum standard of civilised existence which should be tolerated." This involves, we are told, a National Banking system and National control of currency and credit, and the nationalisation of the importation of food and raw materials. It apparently involves also reorganisation and efficiency in industry and agriculture ; and (conditionally on its acceptance by the annual conference of the I.L.P.) the payment of supplements to working class incomes, varying with the number of persons in each household. All of these are proposals, and cannot be described as immediate steps. The immediate steps which appear to be intended are :—

- (1) The Labour Movement to set up a commission to fix a living wage;
- (2) The demand for a living wage and for the " broad Socialist programme through which alone it can be realised " to be asserted;
- (3) The Labour Party to announce that it will introduce this programme when next in office;

- (4) The preparation of measures for the necessary economic reorganisation so that Labour may introduce them without delay.

It is difficult to see wherein the new character of these "definite steps" consists. The Labour Movement has from time to time drafted schemes and made demands, perhaps not on these exact subjects, but nevertheless covering many branches of economic reorganisation. The I.L.P. itself has from time to time put forward similar schemes in the resolutions adopted by its annual conferences. Immediate steps which consist in preparing plans are no doubt sometimes useful, but only if they involve definite lines of action to carry out those plans. What does the I.L.P. manifesto propose in the way of action?

In the first place, the advocacy of "this parliamentary policy"; and secondly, "the I.L.P. urges that Labour should stand behind every group of underpaid workers who struggle to attain the standard of civilisation demanded as a national minimum." Here at least we have a definite suggestion of a policy; but, if literally interpreted, a very limited policy. Does it or does it not mean a break with the MacDonald policy of opposing the development of an industrial alliance and Trade Union action generally? This question becomes important as soon as the commission to fix a living wage issues its report. Brailsford himself suggests the difficulties that will arise. He says:—

a commission set up by the Labour Movement itself shall fix a definite living wage in definite figures.

On what are these definite figures to be based? The manifesto states "the minimum standard of civilised existence which should be tolerated." Brailsford, however, suggests in his interpretation that the question of the industry's ability to pay would be the determining factor. He says:—

you might define your general living wage at once, but in the more backward industries it could only be enforced by gradual steps and stages. If you take as your standard the needs of the average family of five persons, how long would it be before agriculture could be reorganised so as to pay a civilised minimum—£4 or even £3—instead of the present 28s. or 30s.?

What is the meaning of this? Surely the meaning is that the I.L.P. proposes that wages should be raised only in accordance with the industry's ability to pay? This is a perfectly intelligible proposal, but it is hardly epoch-making for the Labour movement.

Moreover, it seems to imply that the I.L.P., when industrial troubles occur, will sit on the fence and await the report of a Royal Commission (or, if they think that is an unfair statement, of a Labour Commission) as to whether the industry can pay the wage required.

Is this an industrial policy which will rally the whole Labour movement? Has the I.L.P. not noticed that the main industrial struggles occur in the industries which are on the whole relatively better paid, and that the usual reply of the capitalist is that the industry cannot afford higher wages? Supposing, for example, that the minimum advocated by the Labour Commission were £3, would the I.L.P. support the industrial struggles of workers who were already receiving more than that minimum, or would it tell them that they must be content? According to the manifesto the I.L.P. will support only those workers striving to attain the national minimum.

This question goes to the root of the matter for the reason that, unless it is answered, there is complete uncertainty as to the principle lying behind the manifesto. There are two alternatives. Either the I.L.P. puts the reorganisation of capitalist industry first, and will support the workers' claims for higher wages only to the extent that they can be conceded by capitalist industry at the particular time; or the I.L.P. believes that the demand for better wages can be used as a lever to destroy the capitalist organisation of industry. The manifesto is completely silent on this essential point. Brailsford, however, heads his article "Socialism in Our Generation—the Living Wage as Lever." In the body of his article he writes—

The living wage, as we conceive it, is a demand so large, so sweeping in the effect which it must have on industry that any courageous and logical effort to win it must carry us promptly into the first stages of Socialist construction. The movement which unitedly struggles for it, the Government which boldly attempts to enforce it, will find itself compelled to lay the foundations of a Socialist society.

Other indications of his attitude are contained in sentences such as :—

Our programme is a challenge to a decisive struggle. . . . It is not an easy programme that we are proposing. It can be won only after the sharpest and most determined struggle in our history. The

industrial weapon and political power must both be used to the full before victory comes in sight.

In these sentences we have, on the surface, a recognition that the programme cannot be carried out unless the workers have secured power. A phrase like "the sharpest and most determined struggle in our history," if it means anything precise, means nothing short of revolution. Yet Brailsford does not admit this. All of his detailed arguments are based on a gradual reorganisation through which the living wage would be made possible. In other words he explains the manifesto as a manifesto of what a Labour Government should do when the workers had already taken power. The transition to power is ignored, unless Brailsford means to assert that the aims of the manifesto can be carried out by parliamentary means. It is true that he refers to industrial action, but, as was pointed out above, this action is to be strictly limited to securing wages which the industry can afford to pay.

In her criticism of the manifesto, Ellen Wilkinson rightly brings to the forefront the question of power. Brailsford in reply repeats the formula of the previous article, but leaves the question unanswered. He says :—

the keys to power seem to us to be the control of credit, raw materials, transport, the generation of mechanical energy, and the ownership of land. With those in the hands of a resolute Labour Government, power would have been won.

This, of course, is a true statement. With power in its hands, power would have been won. But the whole question is how the power is to be won.

The attitude in regard to industrial disputes is in fact the real key to any definite policy. If in any struggle for wages, whether it be for advances demanded by the men or for wage cuts demanded by the employers, the I.L.P. is going to determine its attitude on the basis of what the industry can afford, the I.L.P. will be directly helping to maintain the capitalist system. But in that event what becomes of the foreword to the manifesto? This foreword argues that the old order is breaking down; capitalist industry has failed to reorganise itself. It is possible, of course, to draw two opposite conclusions from a recognition of this fact. It is possible to say that, because capitalist industry has failed to reorganise itself, therefore the I.L.P. will step in to help them to put things straight. Or

it is possible to say that, because capitalist industry cannot be reorganised, therefore the I.L.P. will take every opportunity of hampering the temporary expedients of capitalism, of urging forward the workers to demand wages and conditions which will involve the collapse of capitalism, and of urging in fact the policy of a resolute war on capitalism, beginning in industrial demands which capitalism cannot give and leading on to the seizure of power and the expropriation of capitalism. In such a policy the question of a minimum wage undoubtedly has its place as a rallying cry, but it is not a minimum wage based on industry's capacity to pay. In such a policy every industrial struggle is supported, whether it be for the minimum wage or for something considerably in excess.

Unfortunately, it is doubtful whether Brailsford has himself realised the difference between these two policies. In spite of the demand for Socialism in our generation, there is absolutely no indication, either in the manifesto or in Brailsford's statement, of what the attitude is on the question of compensation for nationalised industries. Nationalisation is mentioned, but it is clear that it is simply an empty formula unless there is an indication of whether it is to be on the basis of compensation or expropriation. Even nationalisation, apparently, is rather distant—say towards the latter end of our generation. Thus Brailsford, explaining how industries would be dealt with by a Labour Government, writes :—

if the industry declared its inability to pay the minimum wage, it (the Labour Government) would then impose reorganisation, dealing, for example, with watered capital, amalgamating small inefficient concerns, and introducing the economy usual within a trust. During this stage it is true that the Union would not need to struggle over wages. It would be busy assisting the Labour Government in the far more vital task of reorganising the industry.

Here we have an almost indefinite perspective of gradualness. For all we know, it may be that the recent Vickers reconstruction was itself the first step of the underground work which the I.L.P. has been carrying on. If the workers in the industry are not content with this reorganisation under a capitalist government, would they be content with it under a Labour Government ? Or would they be content to learn from the Labour Government exactly what saving had been effected by the reduction of capital, and to accept an equivalent sum in wages ? Would they not be more likely to say to

the I.L.P.: "You promised us Socialism in our generation ; you promised us support on the industrial field ; but having put you in power, we find you are not a resolute Labour Government, but merely a Government which is preserving the frame-work of capitalism, and by improving the organisation of capitalist industry, thereby lengthening the period before we shall get Socialism."

The fact is that for all the phrases of the class struggle which have crept into the manifesto, and more particularly into Brailsford's explanation, the authors of the manifesto have had no theoretical basis on which they could build up a concrete policy. The foreword of the manifesto refers to "the intensified struggle between the possessing classes and the workers." This is taken as proof that "the old order is breaking down." Throughout the whole of the manifesto this is the only reference to the capitalist class as an organisation that fights the workers. The I.L.P. theory of the class struggle evidently contains no place for a capitalist class at least as resolute as the most resolute Labour Government. The class struggle without the capitalist class is of course a more pleasant form of the doctrine ; on this basis it is possible to picture an easy transition from disorganisation to organisation, from poverty to "the minimum standard of civilised existence," from the rejection of the socialist measures by "Labour's opponents" to a speedy triumphant victory at the polls, from a victory at the polls to the nationalisation of banking, and from that to Utopia.

In such a scheme of things it is possible to advocate the endowment of mothers and children—an essential measure of Socialist construction—without realising that the introduction of this scheme *under capitalism* would lead to the enforcement of wage reductions in every industry. In such a scheme of things it is possible to think of taxing the rich into poverty and of endowing the poor with riches. In such a scheme of things, in short, it is possible to imagine anything and everything. Unfortunately, the capitalist class exists, and experience all the world over shows that it is "resolute."

There are probably few members of the I.L.P. who do not realise this. And, realising this, they must also realise that any "immediate steps" which are contemplated must have some relation to the fact that a strong capitalist class is now in power,

wielding not only the arms of democratic constitutionalism, but also the arms of the armed forces. Is it conceivable that a strongly entrenched capitalist class will listen to the claims of justice, will lay down its arms and give all it has to the poor ? Does the membership of the I.L.P., does the Administrative Council of the I.L.P., really hold that view ? And if it does not, what is the missing step between asserting the demands of justice and getting power to satisfy these demands ? Surely the missing step is just “ the sharpest and most determined struggle in our history.”

Brailsford justifies the demand for a living wage on the ground that :—

One does not win power as one solves a problem in engineering or economics. One must appeal to simple human motives. Even the Russians did not attain it simply by demanding “ all power to the Soviets.” They promised peace to the army, bread to the towns and the land to the peasants.

This is quite true, but it is incomplete. One must appeal to simple human motives—in other words, a political party which really sets out to lead the workers to victory must express the fundamental needs of the workers. But if Brailsford cites the Russian experience at all, let him cite the whole of it. The Bolsheviks did not attempt to mislead the workers as to what they were up against. “ All power to the Soviets ” was as essential a part of their programme as peace, bread and land. They told the workers that they could secure peace, bread and land only by taking power, breaking up the capitalist organisation of industry and building up a new Socialist organisation under the protection of the workers armed against the counter-revolution.

If this is the meaning of a “ resolute Labour Government,” then why the gradualness of the reorganisation of industries if and when they declared themselves unable to pay a living wage ? And a living wage which, as Brailsford indicates, is only to be enforced by gradual steps and stages.

No, the authors of the manifesto have tried to reconcile two irreconcilable policies—one evolutionary, the other revolutionary. Using some of the revolutionary phrases, they have wrapped them about an evolutionary skeleton ; and when Ellen Wilkinson calls attention to the protruding bones, Brailsford claps on more revolutionary phrases, and leaves it at that. No doubt the figure

will serve as a scarecrow for the Duke of Northumberland, but it will not do to lead the workers to victory. It can't walk.

Yet the very fact that the programme has been issued is significant. It means that the I.L.P. is stirring from its long sleep and is once again faced with the issues it faced in 1921. At that time also a programme had been demanded by the rank and file and was drawn up with much toil. But the evolutionary elements in the I.L.P. knew that the programme was demanded by the "Left," and that the real issue was the question of affiliation to the Third International—the question of a revolutionary policy instead of the evolutionary policy for which the I.L.P. had stood for many years. The left wing was defeated, and the programme was shelved.

But the issues facing the working class could not be shelved. The industrial collapse of 1921, the persistent depression since then, have shown, if not to "the simplest voter," at any rate to the thinking trade unionist, that the attitude of Black Friday and the attitude of the I.L.P. conference of 1921 are identical, and arise from the same lack of a clear perception of what the class struggle is and where it leads.

The I.L.P. is again faced with a decision on this very issue, and on this occasion it has the experience of "Red Friday" behind it. Its conference may be within a few weeks of a similar crisis for the working class.

Will it continue its eve-of-Christmas carol, and, like good King Wenceslas, observing the poverty of the poor man, set out to relieve his poverty with as much flesh and wine as the industry can afford at the moment? This is the actual content of the manifesto.

Or will it realise that "The rude winds' wild lament, and the bitter weather," even in the carol, involved such a long and painful journey that even the poet was unable to finish the story? There is no record that Wenceslas ever reached the poor man's hut, or of what the poor man said when he reached it, or of what happened to the poor man or Wenceslas afterwards. So far as any end is indicated, the suggestion is that men possessing wealth and rank (the capitalist class) can live in secure possession if they throw a few crumbs occasionally to the poor (the working class). To adapt the moral to I.L.P. terminology, revolution is to be avoided by giving the workers more purchasing power.

The British working class needs some clear programme of immediate demands, not as an alternative to revolution, but to serve as a rallying cry to meet the offensive of the capitalists and to transform the workers' defensive into an offensive campaign which will have immediate results for the workers. In such a programme, a commission which will take into account the ability of the industry to pay has no place. Whatever criticism of details may be raised against the various "Left Wing" programmes that have been put forward, they do at least come nearer to the immediate needs of the working class than the New Year manifesto of the I.L.P. If the I.L.P. is honestly trying to find a rallying cry, let it join wholeheartedly (as its members are doing in the local Labour organisations) in the "Left Wing" movement. There it will find not only the basis through which the whole working class can be united, but also the will to move forward and a relatively clear conception of the meaning of the class struggle. There it will find that the successful rallying cry is a definite fighting policy which recognises the implication of "the most determined struggle in our history," and that what the Left Wing is trying to get away from is the spirit of the Christmas carol expressed obscurely in the I.L.P. manifesto, but more clearly in MacDonald's appeal for industrial peace.

THE LEFT WING

By WM. PAUL

(Editor, *Sunday Worker*)

ONE of the most striking features of the history of the British working class is that it has, time after time, during periods of economic and political crises, thrown up militant groups which were always out-manœuvred by the moderate leaders who controlled the official machinery of the Movement. It is not necessary to examine the many futile attempts made, before the war, to give the British workers a Left-Wing lead. We can find an abundance of facts since 1918 to prove our point.

Everyone in the Labour Movement knows that there were revolutionary tendencies among the workers from 1918 to 1920. They flocked into the Trade Unions in great numbers. The capitalist class and its Government were aware of the ferment of revolt that was stirring up the masses. There were indications on all sides that the proletariat were prepared to follow a bold lead. This lead was not given. The great spirit of revolt was frittered away. Instead of important concessions having been won, the workers were ultimately led in such a way that they suffered defeat after defeat.

The important question we have to ask ourselves to-day, if we intend to glean any experience from our past failures, is why a Left-Wing leadership did not manifest itself and supply the guidance that was so much needed in 1918 and the two following years ?

Firstly : the Left-wing Groups on the industrial and political field were scattered up and down the country, and were impotent *because they had no organised contact with each other and no common policy.*

Secondly : this criminal weakness of the Left Wing was further paralysed by the clever tactics of the Right-Wing leaders, who were organised, and whose policy was to delay every attempt at concerted attack upon the capitalist class.

Thirdly : the propertied interests, in the absence of an organised Left Wing with a common policy, were able to use the timidity of

the Right-Wing leaders to side-track all the revolutionary tendencies of the period and to so weaken the Movement that it could not defend itself against the cruel blows that began to shower upon it in 1921 and the following years.

While the workers were being battered from defeat to defeat, the capitalist class and its press praised the wise policy of the parliamentary and industrial Right-Wing leaders and, at the same time, attacked every manifestation of militant tactics either as a "Red" plot engineered by the recently formed Communist Party, or as something that had been planned in Moscow. So cleverly was this game played that well-known Right Wingers were enabled to earn enormous sums of money by attacking the "Reds" in the capitalist Press. But the propertied interests always demand good value for their money. They knew that a Left-Wing Movement was bound to come into existence and they were determined to kill it at birth by smothering it as a "Red" menace. So successful were they in creating this psychological atmosphere that when attempts were made, last year, to build up an organised militant movement, many leaders who thought themselves Left Wingers got cold feet and ran away from it as something that had been specially concocted by the Communists.

Such childish tactics could not for long hold back the development of a Left-Wing Movement in Britain. The problems facing the workers are such that they are being driven forward, even in spite of themselves, to attack capitalism. The rising spirit of industrial discontent made itself felt in the Hull Trades Union Congress in 1924. It expressed itself in an even more determined form last year at Scarborough. One of the main factors in the consolidation and success of Left-Wing industrial expression was that it was organised, to some extent, by the Minority Movement inside the Trade Unions.

While the industrial Left Wing had many elements of organised contact, both in policy and action, no serious attempt had been made inside the Labour Party to organise the wide-spread Left-Wing feeling against the liberal policy of the Right-Wing parliamentarians. The only organised group that opposed MacDonaldism was the small band of Communists who fought very bravely to bring the Labour Party back to its Labour principles.

The determined attempt made at the Edinburgh, London and Liverpool Labour Party Conferences to expel them made a very deep impression upon those who imagined they were Left Wingers because they used Left-Wing phrases. When deeds were demanded these Left Wingers failed.

This was most clearly revealed at the London and Liverpool Conferences where the Right-Wing leaders put forth their liberal policy. None of the Left Wingers, outside of the small Communist group, dared to put forward an alternative programme. But there was something more than a mere lack of moral courage. The main reason for the collapse of the Left Wing at the big conferences was their lack of organised contact and the absence of any common line of action. And this weakness, let it be emphasised, is still preventing the rise of a real Left Wing that means business.

There are many reasons why it is difficult to organise a Left Wing upon a common policy. Up and down the country there are thousands who are in revolt against MacDonaldism. This is, of course, a spontaneous revulsion against liberalism. But it requires much more than a hatred of liberalism to produce a good Left Wing. It requires something of a positive character in the shape of a definite policy of organised action. Until such a policy and lead is produced the Left Wing must remain a tendency, a sort of sentimental yearning after something that has little relation to the immediate needs of the masses or the concrete realities of the present day. And yet the revolt against MacDonaldism is the symptom that the rank and file Left Wing do want a lead in the struggle against capitalism.

Another factor that tends to create misunderstanding, in the ranks of those opposed to the Right Wing, is the confusion of those who realise the impossibility of operating the decisions of Scarborough and Liverpool which cut across each other.

Why then, it may be asked, do not the Left-Wing parliamentary leaders give the lead? It is because of their fear of the Right Wing. The Left-Wing parliamentarians are not afraid to use bold phrases in the constituencies when they are amongst the rank and file. But they are not prepared to organise the rank and filers and give them a Socialist policy. Neither MacDonald nor Henderson are afraid of critics who do not proceed further

than phrases. Their wrath will be instantly roused, however, when any criticism inside the Party manifests itself in an organised policy.

From all this it follows that the Left-Wing element, scattered up and down the country, can expect little help from the "ginger group" in the House of Commons. Attempts must be made, and are being made with growing success, to hammer out a Left-Wing policy of united action. This will demand some simple machinery, inside the Labour Party, to keep the militant rank and file in organised contact with each other. Unless this is done the present Left-Wing ferment may be, once again, out-manœuvred by the cunning Right-Wing leaders working hand-in-hand with the capitalist Press.

Without under-estimating the influence of the Right Wing one must pay attention to the importance of the enthusiastic Left-Wing Groups which are now operating all over the country. The provincial towns are holding conferences, and one has only to notice the success of the Greater London Left Wing Provisional Committee to see that not only is a militant policy being demanded, but that one is taking root. The London Left Wing Conference, held on January 23, was represented by no less than 107 delegates, of whom 53 were sent by local Labour Parties. In addition to this, many of the important Labour Parties have decided to suspend the liberal decisions rushed through at Liverpool. These facts indicate the real spirit of the rank and file of the Movement.

There are several important factors that are present to-day that were absent in the past. *Firstly*: the capitalist class can make no concessions to the workers and are actually trying to depress their already low standard. These attacks of the employers and the chronic conditions of capitalism must keep driving all alert elements in the Labour Movement towards the Left. *Secondly*: the Left Wing has now a press that is neither afraid of the capitalist newspapers nor the threats of the Right-Wing leaders. Viewed from this angle the prospects of a powerful Left-Wing mass movement are indeed bright.

THE MURDER OF GUSTAV LANDAUER

By ERNST TOLLER

THE name of Gustav Landauer is little known in England. But Landauer was one of the most important figures in the German Revolution of 1918-19. He was a Communist agitator who had fought since his teens in the working-class movement. His books—*Call to Socialism*, *Reckoning*, *Speeches*¹—show what a fervid revolutionary this man was. On the intellectual and spiritual side his personality is outstanding. His work *Shakespeare*, in two volumes, which contains unusually fine and powerful essays on individual plays of Shakespeare's, is among the best work which has been written in German on the great playwright. Important also are Landauer's essays on Tolstoy, Walt Whitman and Kropotkin.

At the beginning of the Revolution, Kurt Eisner called Landauer to Munich. He was among the most active members of the Munich Soviet. After the murder of Kurt Eisner he became People's Commissary for Education in the Bavarian Soviet Republic.

The following account shows the ghastly way in which the German counter-revolutionaries got rid of this man. It may be of interest to English readers.

It is the report—told in his own words—of a comrade whom I met in prison, and who was Gustav Landauer's companion in the last hours before the murder.

The last words, says this comrade, which Gustav Landauer said to his torturers and murderers were, "Kill me, then—but I would that you were men!"

It was on the evening of May 1, 1919, in the court-house jail of Starnberg, near Munich, in which the members of the Starnberg Workers' Council had been imprisoned after the entry of the White Guards. A great deal of noise and fuss led us to think, said my comrade, that yet another wicked criminal was being brought in. It was, as we learned after some time, our comrade Landauer.

¹*Aufruf zum Socialismus, Rechenschaft, Reden.*

He had been arrested outside Munich and, since he could not be locked up there, because of the fighting which was going on, was brought to Starnberg. Early the next day, after we had exchanged greetings, we asked Comrade Landauer what he thought of the present situation. After we had expressed our fears, which later proved all too true, Landauer said he thought that the commotion would subside in a few days. How very much he had deceived himself was soon to be proved on his own person.

On May 2, about ten in the morning, the jailer came in and called the names : Landauer, Mayer, Burgmeier, Salzmann. When we went into the reception room, we were told that we were being taken away, but were not told whither. We four men were escorted by five White Guards with fixed bayonets to a motor lorry which was standing near. We had to get on the lorry, which was then driven off, through the Forsterrieder Park towards Stadelheim, as the White Guards told us.

The first stop was made at the Cross-Roads Inn, at Fürstenried. Here were great masses of troops, and apparently a military headquarters. The soldiers, who did not take much notice of us three Workers' Councillors, were very interested in Landauer. Now and again they tried to get on the lorry. Landauer must already have had a feeling that matters might take a bad turn, because I noticed him turn to the leader of our escort and say, "Please protect me." Thereupon the latter, so far as he was able, kept the soldiers away from the lorry.

Here Landauer, who had apparently been arrested somewhere near Fürstenried, wanted back his rucksack, which had been taken from him. He asked the leader to do something about it, which the latter did. After some time an officer came out of the inn and said, "Landauer is not to have his rucksack."

At last we drove on, to Solln, where our escort had food. When I complained that we were hungry too, and might not get any more to eat that day, the soldiers gave us some bread. I gave comrade Landauer some, which he took with thanks. I also offered him a cigarette, which he smoked, regretting again that his rucksack had not been given to him, for there were cigarettes in it.

From Solln we drove to the Sendlinger Oberfeld, until, in front of a factory, we were told that we could not drive any farther.

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Fighting was still going on there. We had to walk over the open country towards Stadelheim. The troops, who were moving towards the town, took hardly any notice of us.

But the scene changed when we got to Stadelheim. Then hell was let loose. Shouts were raised, such as, "Landauer—they are bringing Landauer." "Smash them dead, the dogs!" Carried along in the midst of a rabble of soldiers, pushed and shoved onward, we arrived in front of the reception room of the jail.

Here Landauer received a violent shove or a blow, so that his glasses fell off. Then the devilry began again. The usual form of taking down particulars about us was not carried out at the reception room, and we were carried on until we were in front of the gate of the Frauenhof.

Here Landauer, who had said something about "damned militarism," was given another heavy blow in the face by a soldier. Thereupon Landauer explained that he meant also the militarism of the Red Army. At this point an officer is said to have shouted, "Halt! Landauer will be shot at once."

I only saw how, after we had been thrust into the middle of the courtyard, a great strong man struck our comrade Landauer in the face with the butt end of a riding-whip (or it might have been a rubber baton). Landauer fell with his hand before his face. At this moment a soldier came to us three Workers' Councillors and told us to follow him. Then a shot rang out, and, as we went through the gate from the small into the large courtyard, the shot was followed by another. I heard that the leader of our escort (who, by the way, was a decent fellow) said that until then he had carried out his task—but then he had been powerless.

We three were led by the soldier and a warder through a gate outside the walls of Stadelheim, and back again to the reception room of the jail, where particulars about us were taken down. Then on the way to the new jail building we had to go again through the small courtyard. There in the middle lay our poor comrade Landauer, dead. One of the soldiers said, "There he lies now—your pal."

The World of Labour

RUSSIA: The Fourteenth Conference of the Russian Communist Party	115
INDIA : Textile Workers' Strike	122
JAPAN: Agricultural Conditions in Japan	123

RUSSIA

The Fourteenth Conference of the Russian Communist Party

THE Fourteenth Conference of the Russian Communist Party opened in Moscow on December 19, 1925. The chief subject before the Conference was the question of the line of development of the "new economic policy," involving a correct estimation of the progress of State Socialism and its effects on the relations of the workers and peasants. A speech by N. Bucharin on this theme appeared in *THE LABOUR MONTHLY*, January, 1926, pp. 18-31. On December 19, 1925, after a debate lasting three days, and after hearing the speeches of Zinoviev, for the minority view, and of Molotov and Stalin, on behalf of the Central Committee, the Conference adopted by 559 votes to 65, with 41 abstentions, the following resolution approving the policy of the Central Committee:—

"The Party Conference fully approves the political and organisatory line of the Central Committee, which strengthened the party of the working class, promoted the general advance of the national economy throughout the whole country and consolidated the position of Socialism within and without the Soviet Union.

"This policy has resulted in the international sphere in a number of fresh recognitions of the Soviet Union by the capitalist countries; the Soviet Union concluded fresh commercial and concession treaties, extended its foreign trade and consolidated its international position. The same policy has resulted, in domestic affairs, in the Soviet Union being in a position to balance the State Budget and rapidly to bring about the development of industry and the further growth of agriculture, along with a general increase in wages and a greater output on the part of the workers; to raise production nearly to the pre-war level, and to secure a growing rôle for the Socialist elements in the entire Soviet economy. Thanks to the same policy the Soviet Union has consolidated the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, and secured the proletarian leadership of this alliance, increased the actual rôle and importance of the co-operatives, brought together, upon the basis of Socialist construction, broad sections of technical and other intellectuals under the leadership of the proletariat and consolidated the community of the peoples of the Soviet Union.

"In recording these successes the Party Conference notes at the same time the errors which have been committed as regards the collection of corn and of foreign trade, which endangered the stability of the *valuta* and brought about an adverse foreign trade balance, whilst a favourable trade balance is a pre-condition for further economic growth. The Party Conference approves of the decisions adopted by the Central Committee in November for the rectification of these errors, and instructs the Central Committee to strengthen the leadership of the Supreme Economic Council in order to avoid such errors in the future.

"The Party is now beginning to work under new international and domestic conditions. In the sphere of foreign political relations the maintenance and prolongation of the breathing space, which has become a period of so-called peaceable relations between the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries, is to be recorded, in spite of the fact that the antagonisms between these two camps are becoming not weaker but more acute. This breathing space furnished the possibility of inner reconstruction and, as a result of the economic relations with foreign countries, brings certain advantages tending to expedite this reconstruction. On the other hand, as a result of the strengthening of connections between the Soviet economy and world capitalism, the former's dependence upon the latter has increased, a fact which brings with it a number of fresh dangers, which must be taken into account by the Party in the struggle for Socialism and in securing the necessary economic independence of the Soviet country.

"Within the capitalist countries there must be recorded a partial stabilisation of capitalism and a relative strengthening of the political power of the European bourgeoisie. The rôle of the United States of America has increased enormously, and almost amounts to financial world hegemony. Further, there must be recorded the gradual decline of the British Empire as a world Power, the antagonisms between the victor and vanquished States, the antagonisms between Europe and America, the undermining of the whole system of imperialism on the part of the awakening colonial and semi-colonial peoples, whose movements in some places has assumed the form of a national war for freedom, and has reached unexampled dimensions, and finally, the growth of new forms of the European Labour Movement, in close connection with the proletariat of the Soviet Union (fight for trade union unity, workers' delegations to the Soviet Union, &c.).

"The relative stabilisation of Europe and its 'pacification' under the hegemony of Anglo-American capital has called into life a whole system of economic and political blocs, the last of which are the Locarno Conference and the Guarantee Treaties directed against the Soviet Union. These blocs and treaties, which are screened by the alleged pacifist League of Nations and by the false talk of disarmament of the Second International, mean in essence nothing else than a new grouping of forces for a fresh war. Against these blocs of the capitalist countries under Anglo-American hegemony, which are accompanied by an enormous increase in armaments and therefore bear within them fresh dangers of war, among them being the danger of an anti-Soviet intervention, there is growing up the *rapprochement* of the proletariat of the advanced countries to the proletariat of the Soviet Union under the slogans of the fight for peace, against all new imperialist wars and against armed attacks on the Soviet Union.

"Upon the basis of this estimation of the international situation the Party Conference instructs the Central Committee to be guided in its policy by the following principles:—

"(1) To consolidate in every possible way the alliance of the proletariat of the Soviet Union, as the basis of world revolution, with the West European proletariat and the suppressed peoples, and to keep to the line of the development and in victory of the international proletarian revolution.

"(2) To conduct a peaceful policy, which shall stand in the centre of the entire foreign policy of the Soviet Government and underlie all its international actions.

"(3) To carry on the work of economic construction from such a point of view that the Soviet Union is converted from a country which imports machines to a country which produces machines, in order that by this means the Soviet Union with its capitalist encirclement shall not become an economic appendage of the capitalist world economy, but an independent economic unit which is building up Socialism, and which, thanks to its economic construction, can become a powerful means for the revolutionising of the workers of all countries and of the suppressed peoples of the colonies and semi-colonies.

“(4) As far as possible, to accumulate economic reserves which can secure the country against all accidents affecting the home and the foreign markets.

“(5) To adopt every measure for strengthening the defensive forces of the country and for strengthening the Red Army and the Red Navy and Air Fleet.

“In the sphere of economic construction the Party Conference adopts the Leninist standpoint, that ‘the Soviet country, as the country of the proletarian dictatorship, possesses everything necessary in order to build up a complete Socialist society.’ The Party Conference considers the fight for the victory of Socialist construction in the Soviet Union to be the chief task of the Party. The period since the Thirteenth Party Conference completely confirms the correctness of this principle. Already before the conquest of power by the proletariat of other countries, but with its unconditional support, without any so-called help on the part of foreign capital, and with uninterrupted struggle against private capital at home, the working class of the Soviet Union, in alliance with the main mass of the peasantry, has achieved the first important successes of Socialist construction. The past year was marked by a tremendously rapid development of the national economy in general, which is approaching the pre-war standard, as well as by the growth of its various branches: industry, agriculture, transport, foreign and home trade, credit and banking system, State finances, &c. Within the national economy of the Soviet Union, which consists of various economic forms (natural peasant economy, small production of commodities, private capitalism, State capitalism and Socialism), the importance of Socialist industry, of State and co-operative trade, of nationalised credits and other positions of power of the proletarian State is rapidly increasing. In this manner there is to be seen the economic advance of the proletariat on the basis of the new economic policy and the advance of the economic system of the Soviet Union in the direction of Socialism. The Socialist State industry is becoming more and more the advanced guard of national economy, which is drawing along with it the entire national economy.

“The Party Conference emphasises that these successes could not have been attained without the active participation of the broad working masses in the general work of construction of Socialist industry (campaigns for raising the productivity of Labour, workshop meetings, &c.).

“At the same time, however, there is developing the particular contradictions of this growth and the specific dangers and difficulties which are determined by this growth. Among these are: the absolute growth of private capital, with the relative sinking of its rôle; the special rôle of private capital, which conducts its business in the village; the growth of *kulak* economy in the village along with the growth of the differentiation of classes in the village; the growth of a new bourgeoisie in the towns, which is attempting to ally itself economically with the trading capitalists and *kulaks* for the fight for the subjugation of the main masses of the middle peasantry.

“In view of all these facts the Party Conference instructs the Central Committee to be guided by the following principles in the sphere of economic policy:—

“(1) The chief attention must be devoted to the task of securing in every way the victory of socialist economic forms over private capital, the strengthening of the monopoly of foreign trade, of the growth of socialist State industry and, under the leadership and with the help of the co-operatives, to draw the largest possible number of peasant undertakings into the work of socialist construction.

“(2) To secure the economic independence of the Soviet Union, which preserves the Soviet Union from becoming an appendage of capitalist world economy, and for this purpose to follow the course of industrialising the country and developing the production of the means of production and the creation of reserves for economic manœuvring.

"(3) On the basis of the resolutions of the Fourteenth National Party meeting efforts must be made to increase the growth of production and the exchange of goods in the country.

"(4) All sources of revenues are to make use of the strictest economy to be observed in the expenditure of State resources, and the pace of development of State industry, of commerce and the co-operatives to be speeded up for the purpose of increasing the rate of socialist accumulation.

"(5) To develop our socialist industry on the basis of a higher technical standard, but nevertheless strictly according to the absorbing capacity of the market, as well as of the financial possibilities of the State.

"(6) To support in every way the development of the Soviet industry in the provinces, by stimulating the initiative of the provincial authorities with regard to organising those industries which are devoted to satisfying the various requirements of the population in general and of the peasantry in particular.

"(7) To support and promote agriculture in the direction of increasing the knowledge of agriculture, developing technical culture, raising the agricultural technique (providing tractors) industrialisation of agriculture, regulating the holding of land, and in the direction of an all-round support of the most varied forms of collective agriculture.

"The Party Conference is of the opinion that one of the most imperative conditions for the solution of these questions, is the fight against the disbelief in the construction of Socialism in our country, as well as against the attempts to regard our undertakings—the undertakings of the consistent-socialist type (Lenin)—as State capitalist undertakings. Such ideological tendencies, which render impossible the conscious attitude of the masses to the building up of socialism in general, and to the building up of socialist industry in particular, are only calculated to hinder the growth of the socialist elements of our economy and to facilitate the struggle of private capital against them. The Party Conference, therefore, considers necessary an extended educational work for the purpose of overcoming these deviations from Leninism.

"As regards the relations of the classes to one another, the Party Conference notes the following basic phenomena, which are determined by the economic development of the Soviet Union: growth of the industrial proletariat, strengthening of the rich peasants in the village; growth of the new bourgeoisie in the town; growth of the activity of all classes and groups in our country. One of the basic forms of the class struggle is at present the struggle between the capitalist and socialist elements in our economy, the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat for the purpose of winning the main masses of the peasantry. This struggle finds its political expression mainly in the attempts of the *kulak* elements of the village to capture the middle peasants and thereby subjugate the Soviets to their influence.

"If the village poor, and before all the agricultural workers, are the support of the proletariat in the village, then the middle peasant is and must be the firm ally of the proletariat. It must not for a moment be forgotten that as a result of the expropriation of the big landowners and the handing over of the big landed estates to the peasantry, and in consequence of the policy of the committees of the village poor and the anti-*kulak* policy in the village, and finally as a result of prohibiting the land being bought and sold (nationalisation of the land), the middle peasantry have become exceedingly strong, and that those sections, in spite of the differentiation process, now form the main mass of the peasantry. Without having these masses as firm allies, or by merely keeping these sections neutral, now, after the consolidation of the proletarian dictatorship, it will be impossible to build up Socialism. For the chief means for the construction of Socialism in the village consists in the growing economic leadership on the part of the Socialist State industry, in the State credit institutions and in other dominating positions which are in the hands of the proletariat, in drawing the main masses of

the peasantry into the co-operative organisation, and in securing the socialist development of this organisation by making use of, overcoming and pushing out its capitalist elements. Every underestimation of the middle peasantry, the failure to understand its very important and special rôle, the attempt to divert the Party from the slogan of a firm alliance with it and to go over to the obsolete slogan of its neutralising, to the 'fear of middle peasantry,' leads therefore to the destruction of the dictatorship of the proletariat; for this would mean the destruction of the workers' and peasants' bloc.

"The struggle against the *kulaks* must be conducted by organising the village poor against the *kulaks*, as well as by consolidating the alliance of the proletariat and the village poor with the middle peasants, for the purpose of separating the middle peasants from the *kulaks* and isolating the *kulaks*.

"The failure to understand the great importance of the struggle in these two directions is bound up with two deviations from the correct line of the Party, which was defined by the Fourteenth National Party meeting and the October Plenum of the Central Committee. The Party Conference emphatically condemns the deviation which consists in the underestimation of the differentiation in the village, which overlooks the dangers connected with the growth of the *kulaks* and the various forms of capitalist exploitation, which does not wish to understand the urgent necessity of pushing back the *kulaks* and curbing their greed for exploitation, which does not recognise the duty of the Party of the proletariat to organise and to rally the village poor and the agricultural labourers in the fight against the *kulaks*.

"But the Party Conference at the same time likewise emphatically condemns the attempt to obscure the fundamental question of Communist policy in the village, the question of the struggle for the middle peasant as the central figure of agriculture and the question of co-operation as the fundamental organisatory form of the movement of the village to Socialism.

"The Party Conference especially emphasises the necessity of the struggle against this last-named deviation. In view of the relative greater preparation of the Party for the immediate fight against the village profiteers, and the possibility of overcoming the first deviation, the overcoming of the second deviation represents a much more difficult task; for this demands more complicated methods of fighting, by combining the methods of political isolation of the *kulaks* with the methods of drawing the masses of the peasantry into the orbit of socialist construction. This is all the more so because, with the present conditions, this second deviation threatens the return to the policy of fighting the *kulaks* by the methods of war Communism and the abandonment of the present party line in the village, which has proved its correctness by important political successes, and also the abandonment of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry, that is, with the abandonment of our entire work of construction.

"The Party Conference fully approves the decisions of the Fourteenth National meeting in the peasant question (including among these that regarding the extension of the tenants law, the right to hire labour, regarding assistance for handicraft industry and the transition from the system of administrative pressure to economic competition and economic struggle, as well as regards the revival of the Soviets, &c.) which aim at a further improvement of the policy of the Party along the line of consolidating the alliance between the working class and the peasantry. The Party Conference declares that this change in the Party policy, which arises from the change in class relations, radically improved the situation in the village, raised the authority of the proletariat and its Party among the peasantry, and created a firm basis for broad organisation work for the purpose of drawing the peasantry into the work of Socialist construction.

"The Party Conference at the same time fully approves the decisions of the October Plenum of the Central Committee regarding work among the village poor. Only to the extent to which the increase of the productive forces in the village (under the

present conditions of the increased activity of all class groupings) is accompanied by the organisation of the landless peasants and the agricultural workers can the appropriate exchange of relations of the class forces and the leadership of the industrial proletariat be guaranteed.

"The Party Conference, in approving the decisions of the Central Committee regarding material assistance for the village poor and regarding the organising of groups of the village poor, emphasises that here there can be no talk either of returning to the village poor committees, or of returning to the system of pressure employed at the times of war Communism and to the practice of anti-*kulakism*, &c. It is a question of organising the village poor which, with the help of the Party and the State power in the struggle on the economic and political front (collective undertakings, artels, co-operatives, peasant committees, Soviets), will overcome the remnants of the psychology of charitable relief, will follow the path of organised class resistance against the village profiteers, and must become a firm support of the proletarian policy in the fight for uniting the middle peasantry with the proletariat.

"The Party Conference declares that agricultural co-operation, both from the standpoint of its economic work as well as regards attracting the masses and correct socialist leadership, is far from fulfilling its great rôle. The Party Conference makes it incumbent on all members to pay the closest regard to developing the agricultural co-operatives and to adopt all measures to ensure their proper growth.

"The increased activity of the masses, together with the growing activity of all class groupings on the basis of the economic advance, is a factor of the greatest political importance. The proletariat and its Party must make use of this growth as the fundamental and leading social force for the purpose of attracting still larger masses into the process of socialist construction on all fronts, and for the fight against the bureaucratism of the State apparatus.

"In the town the growth of the activity of the masses found its expression in the revival of the State Soviets, of the trade unions, the workers' co-operatives, &c. In the village the increased activity of the masses of the middle peasantry and of the village poor found its expression in the revival of the Soviets and of the co-operatives. The Party Conference once again emphasises that, under the present conditions, the dictatorship of the proletariat cannot be consolidated by methods of war Communism and administrative pressure, that the co-operatives cannot be built up except on the voluntary principle or without the elected organs giving account to their electors and without these organs having the confidence of the members, that the revival of the Soviets and the increase of their connection with broad circles of the working population is a necessary prerequisite for all further work of the Party and of the Soviet power.

"The revival of the village Soviets and of the co-operatives, which provide scope for the initiative and activity of the peasantry, is a precondition, from the point of view of maintaining and consolidating the proletarian leadership, of the revival, the increased activity, and consolidation of the proletarian organisations. Only under this condition can the proletarian dictatorship be consolidated and the carrying out of a correct political line from the point of view of Socialism be guaranteed. Hence arises in the first place the slogan of the revival of the trade unions, these proletarian mass organisations which must embrace the entire proletariat. Trade union democracy must be that method which facilitates the participation of the masses in common work, extends the possibilities of selecting new comrades for higher positions, renews the leading cadres of the trade union organisations, and renders possible the class solidarity of and raises the class consciousness of the proletarian masses.

"In order, accordingly, to carry through the entire work of reviving the mass organisations of the proletariat and of the peasantry, it is necessary that the leading

force of these organisations, *i.e.*, the Russian Communist Party in all its constituent parts, follows the path of consistent inner Party democracy. The Party Conference approves the November Manifesto of the Plenum of the Central Committee regarding inner Party democracy, and proposes to the Party organisations that they consider in this respect the following tasks :—

“(a) Raising the activity of the broad Party masses in the discussion and solution of the most important questions of Party policy.

“(b) Consistent observation of eligibility of the leading Party organs by attracting new forces to the work of leadership, extending the circle of active Party workers, and training fresh Party cadres in order to help the old.

“(c) Raising the qualification of Party functionaries, especially raising their theoretical level.

“(d) Spreading of the principles of Leninist theory among the broadest Party circles.

“The consolidation of the Party and the strengthening of its leading rôle in all spheres of constructive work, which is more necessary than ever in the present complicated situation, is a prerequisite for the correct regulation of the composition of the Party. The Party Conference considers it necessary to conduct a policy in this sphere which aims at raising the qualitative composition of the Party organisations, which strives to attract ever greater numbers of workers into the Party, and constantly to raise the preponderance of its proletarian Party core. The Party Conference at the same time affirms the necessity of a strict carrying out of the measures laid down for restricting admittance into the Party to only proletarian elements, but rejects the policy which leads to an immoderate swelling of the Party membership and to its being swamped with semi-proletarian elements which have not passed through any school of trade unions and of proletarian organisations. The Party Conference condemns such attempts, which have nothing in common with Leninism, which deny the correct change of relations between the Party (advance guard of the class) and the class, and render impossible the Communist leadership.

“The leading rôle of the Party can only be secured by absolute unity of will, by solidarity of the Party cadres, with the maintenance and consolidation of Bolshevik proletarian discipline in the Party.

“The Party Conference approves the policy of the Central Committee, which aimed at not allowing an open discussion with some leaders of the Leningrad organisation and their individual supporters in the Central Committee, and to removing the differences of opinion within the Party, as well as securing the collective leadership of the Party.

“The Party Conference instructs the Central Committee to conduct a determined fight against all attempts to create a breach in the Party, no matter from whence they may come and by whom they may be conducted. The Party Conference expresses the firm conviction that the Leningrad organisation will march in the first ranks of the fighters for the solidarity and the unity of our Lenin Party—a unity which must be maintained and strengthened at all costs.

“The Party Conference welcomes the strengthening of the bonds between the proletariat of the Soviet Union and the proletariat of all countries. The Party Conference sees in this the growing influence of the Soviet Union as the point of support of the International Labour Movement. The Party Conference proposes to the Central Committee that it continues in the future to strengthen and to consolidate with all its powers the bonds of international solidarity, under whose banner was born the dictatorship of the proletariat, and under the sign of which the proletariat fought for and strengthened its rule.”

INDIA

Textile Workers' Strike

THE strike of mill hands in the Bombay cotton industry ended with the withdrawal of the notices of reduction of wages on December 1, which followed the Government's announcement of November 30 that the cotton excise would be suspended. The strike, which lasted for ten weeks, was the cause of intense suffering to the 150,000 workers engaged. Many are reported to have succumbed in the effort to travel by road back to their villages, and many more have fallen victims to the epidemics which appeared in the slum tenements which they inhabit in Bombay. It was stated that at first the mills were resuming work slowly, but the number of hands presenting themselves was insufficient. Actually only a few thousands were ready to accept the reduced wages.

The chief excuse used by the millowners for their action in cutting wages by $11\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. was the burden of the excise duty of $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on Indian woven cotton goods, amounting to 21,000,000 rupees per year for the whole industry, of which about two-thirds is paid by the Bombay millowners. The campaign for the removal of this duty has been one of the planks in the whole Nationalist struggle for a long period, and has been especially intense since the slump set in after the post-war period of prosperity. A demand was made for its abolition by the Legislative Assembly in March of this year, and again on September 16, after the outbreak of the strike, the Government was defeated by 57-32 on a motion that the excise duty be suspended for the rest of the year. These votes, however, were ignored by the Government. Subsequently deputations from the millowners extracted from the Viceroy a promise that the duty would be removed when financial considerations permitted. Finally the Government gave way, and it was announced that the financial position was now sufficiently assured to allow of the duty being suspended from December 1, 1925. Thereupon the millowners announced the restoration of the previous wage rates, and the strike came to an end.

The leaders of Indian Labour took part in the campaign against the excise duty and, while opposing the wage-cut, proclaimed their complete solidarity with the millowners on that question. Their deputation to the Viceroy in August put forward as its chief demand that the duty be removed, on condition that the relief so obtained be used to restore the wage-cut.

No steps, however, were taken to organise resistance by the operatives to the employers' attack, and until the last moment the Bombay leaders expressed themselves against a strike, although they warned the millowners that the mood of the men was such that a strike could hardly be averted. A few days after the strike actually broke out, a meeting of the Labour leaders was held in Bombay which

resolved that as the situation had become serious and had got out of hand the leaders should do nothing for the present, but to watch things for a week or so. (*Bombay Chronicle*, September 21, 1925.)

Meanwhile they contented themselves with making unavailing representations to the Governor of Bombay.

The extraordinary solidarity and determination of the men finally

compelled the assistance of the leaders, and towards the end of October a Committee of Assistance to the Textile Workers was organised representing the chief Labour organisations in Bombay, with Mr. N. M. Joshi at the head, for the purpose of providing relief for destitute and starving workers. By its help many hundreds of strikers were enabled to leave Bombay for their village homes, and towards the end of the strike over 5,000 strikers in Bombay were being given a grain allowance daily at nineteen different centres, the total expenditure increasing to about £60 per day.

This relief work would have been impossible but for the donations that have come from the European Trade Union Movement, and it is thanks to their aid that the strikers have been helped to hold out and a great deal of suffering alleviated. The Indian trade union organisations have given such help as their meagre financial resources permitted, but the Indian Nationalists and politicians generally, in whose interest the struggle had actually been brought about, stood by without lifting a finger to give financial or other support to the strikers.

JAPAN

Agricultural Conditions in Japan

THE total area of cultivated land in Japan is approximately 15,000,000 acres, of which rather more than half supports rice. The number of houses occupied by farmers and peasants is about 5,500,000, and the usual size of plot cultivated is about 2.7 acres. About one-third of the houses are owned by their occupants. Cultivating such small plots, the peasants naturally live in conditions of the greatest poverty.

The system of land tenure is such that the farmer pays approximately 55 per cent. of the total of the produce as rent to the landlord.

In the existing conditions of agriculture, the maximum possible production of rice on a farm of 2.7 acres (most farms and holdings appear to be near this mean figure) is 25 *koku* (1 *koku* = 4.9 bushels). Of this the landlord takes about 14 *koku*, leaving 11 for the farmer, which at current prices can be sold for 440 *yen* (£44). A large proportion of this income is spent on tools, fertilisers, &c.

The landlord, on the other hand, claims that as the present price of land is about 2,200 *yen* per acre, his return is small—about 7 per cent. per annum after allowing for taxation. In reply it is pointed out that the land was originally obtained at the price of about 100 *yen* per acre in the early years of the *Meiji* era (since c. 1870).

Most of the landlords (*jinushi*) own hundreds or thousands of acres, and there is in consequence a very sharp clash of class interest between them and their tenants. Many associations (*No-kwai*) have been set up for the preservation of good relations between landlords and tenants. In December, 1923, 347 of these were officially reported, with a total membership of 47,000. On the other hand, in the last few years a purely cultivators' organisation, *Nippon-Nomin-Kumiai* (Japanese Agricultural Workers' Union), has arisen, and in 1925 claimed more than 1,000 branches and 300,000 members. It is based on the recognition of the class struggle, and aims at a complete reorganisation of the whole system of agriculture.

BOOK REVIEWS

TWO SIDES OF A MEDAL

The Other Side of the Medal. By Edward Thompson. (Hogarth Press, 1925, 5s.)

THIS little book may be considered to serve a double purpose. It is intended by the author to be an exposure of the unfairness of British treatment of the Indian Mutiny, but it is equally an exposure of the author.

Perhaps there are still people who believe that British rule in India has been fair yet kind, and that it is impossible for an Englishman to commit an atrocity. In that case it may be worth while recommending them the perusal of this book, for it contains a record of facts that should make them blench. No school book omits to mention the atrocity of the "Black Hole" of Calcutta, but they all, larger works included, draw a veil over the ghastly horrors committed by the British in the process of suppression of the rebellion. Mr. Thompson, with a high moral purpose in view, has felt that the time has come to show something of the "other side of the medal."

The book is of no value in helping towards an historical understanding of the Mutiny. It is true that the author attempts to show that the Mutiny was much more than the simple military revolt caused by the issue of the "greased cartridges" which it is represented to be in popular school books, and he quotes the statement of the *Oxford History of India* that:—

Discontent and unrest were widely prevalent among the civil population, and in several places the populace rose before the sepoy at those stations mutinied.

But he considers that the question how far it was a popular movement, a real war for independence (the view taken by many Indian nationalists), to be still "an unsolved problem." The truth is, of course, that it was neither the one nor the other, for it was a reactionary movement for the restoration of the old social conditions, led by the feudal landed class, whose lands and titles had been filched from them by the British Administration. Thus, for instance, Kaye, in his history of the Sepoy war, points out that during the process of land settlement (the revision of land ownership accompanying the survey of British territory and the fixing of rents):—

The Talukdars, an influential class of men, were dispossessed of rights and interests in the land and reduced to absolute ruin;

and further

Under the system which we introduced, men who had been proprietors of vast tracts of country . . . shrivelled into tenants of mud huts and possessors only of a few cooking pots.

Later on he quotes a letter to Lord Canning from Oudh which says that the "Talukdars are forcibly resuming their former villages and slaying all who oppose them."

The expropriated feudal class, together with the destruction of the power and authority of the Brahmin priesthood, provided potent material for leading a rebellion. But the masses of the people were less interested in restoring

feudalism, and the progressive elements, especially the intellectuals, were firmly on the side of the British. Thus the mutiny took strongest hold in the Native States, where feudalism was strongest, and it could be quickly suppressed as it was by no means a united national uprising.

All this, however, finds no mention in the book under review. The author's intention was different. As a loyal, God-fearing English missionary, proudly conscious of the general beneficence of British rule and of the superiority of his race over the benighted heathen, he is convinced that if his fellow-Christians would admit that we have not been fair in our treatment of the mutiny, then there could be reconciliation between Britain and India, and the two nations could be friends.

This sounds like a caricature, but it is a literal statement of his theme. Far be it for him to even hint at such gross material things as the economic exploitation of India ! All evils, and especially the evils of Indian behaviour towards their British beneficiaries, are the working of the poison of our treatment of the mutiny. Indians are a cringing inferior race of beings. To take a characteristic example of his many strictures :—

The measures of self-government granted from time to time have frequently been worked listlessly, or—I am afraid it is impossible to avoid repetition of the word—dishonestly. The world's literature of abuse might be ransacked and still the crown for utter irrelevance and reckless unfairness allowed to rest with the Indian extremist Press.

He enlarges on this theme for pages. But he has a remedy. We should tell the truth about the mutiny, for what Indians need is for their

self-respect to be given back to them. Make them free again and enable them to look us and everyone in the eyes, and they will behave like free people and cease to lie.

That, one supposes, is the missionary standpoint. Whatever the intention, the book is an insult to India, and will certainly there be regarded as such, although it is illuminating to notice that this does not seem to have struck reviewers in this country (including even reviewers in the Labour press). The time has gone by for the complacent insolence that can speak of "Sir Henry Fowler's noble appeal to the House of Commons that every member should consider himself a member for India," and those canting philanthropists who do not understand the condescension of this attitude should give up politics and confine themselves to parochial charity.

C. P. D.

A POOR STORY OF COAL

The Other Story of Coal. By T. J. Parry Jones. (George Allen & Unwin, 2s. 6d.)

MR. PARRY JONES, who informs us that he has worked thirty-one years in the mines, has written a very poor story indeed. The book, the author tells us, is an effort "to place the views of 'Jack Jones,' the miner, to the forefront." "Jack Jones" will not feel complimented at the picture that one of his mates has drawn of him. Here is a sample : "The observations of the rustics below ground are pithy and often show a wealth of pictorial mind." How quaint !

The book contains a grave warning to commercial travellers. Upon so insignificant a person as a commercial traveller may rest the responsibility of a revolutionary and dangerous decision at a miners' conference. He tells them to be most careful and discreet. "Haphazard criticism when travelling by train might rouse passion; in a delegate on his way to a conference; therefore it is necessary to be cautious."

It is being generous to the author not to dig out a whole mass of contradictions and inconsistencies. His qualification to write of the political views of the miner may be judged from his conception of the various shades of political thought amongst the miners. He places the miners into four categories: "A," the rigid constitutional Socialist; "B," the Socialist who firmly believes in both the "*industrial* aim as well as the *political* for the preservation and advancement of the workers' rights." "The 'C' section are the Syndicalist or Industrial section. They are termed under various names, such as 'the Left Wing,' 'the Ginger Group,' the erstwhile 'Unofficial Reform Union,' and its latest term, 'the Minority Movement.'" He then goes on to say, "*It may also be stated that from the ranks of these varied sections the Communist Party gets its ardent and enthusiastic support. This motley crew is made up of all anti-political sections in the mining industry*" (italics ours). After reading the book one is not surprised that the author should fail to see how inconsistent it must be of a "motley crew" of anti-politicals, such as he describes, to be the "most ardent and enthusiastic" supporters of a political party.

Much "sob stuff" is thrown in about choirs, ambulance, mining students, &c., and harsh things are said about coalowners, and, in particular, about trusts and combines.

Speaking of the coming crisis in May the author says:—

Unless all parties—workers, owners and Government—are prepared to listen attentively to the voice of reason, we shall witness unparalleled scenes in this country. The country and its communal welfare should receive prior consideration before any other. Everyone's prayers should have an addition: "O Lord, give us sound common sense."

If Mr. Parry Jones ventures into print at any time in the future, we, too, would add a prayer: "O Lord, give Parry Jones some sound common sense."

B. W.

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